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PARLIAMENT meets again with British politics in a very odd condition. Few people have any confidence in the National Government: even fewer see any hopeful alternative. All political parties report a remarkable apathy in the constituencies and each by-election tells the same story of many abstentions, a great slump in the Government vote, an un-spectacular increase in the Labour vote, and no sign of a rally to the divided Liberal cause. Lord Beaverbrook and the independent Liberals were equally unsuccessful in impressing the electors of East Fife. How indeed can the Liberals expect anyone's confidence while their leaders remain wandering spirits, anxious to demonstrate, as Sir Herbert Samuel again put it, their "independence and freedom," and yet fearful of wounding the Government's feelings? Sir Herbert, in fact, found the excuses we anticipated last week for refusing to cross the floor of the House, and Major Nathan was left in a minority of one. No doubt the Liberals will cross some day, presumably when Lord Grey and other veterans find the Government more objectionable than the prospects of co-operating with Mr. Lloyd George. Whether they will have any followers left by then seems rather dubious.

Slums and Economy

The Government is not, however, altogether impervious to public opinion. Sir Edward Hilton Young's housing pronouncement, unsatisfactory though it was, showed that he has been moved several stages since the speech in which he spoke of building 12,000 houses a year. He now says that he meant 12,000 as a minimum and that, while abolishing the Wheatley subsidy (the one really effective housing measure since the war), he will do his best, on the lines suggested in Sir Ernest Simon's recent article in these columns, to hurry slum clearance under the Greenwood Act. We shall know better what this means when we see what is the Minister's notion of an "improvement area"—which may mean anything from an area the size of the Ministry of Health to one that includes Greater London. Sir Hilton Young further promises a departmental inquiry into the proposal for a National Housing Corporation, outlined by Sir Raymond Unwin in our columns this week. It is no secret that Sir Raymond has been one of the moving spirits in putting this idea on the political map, and to have got the proposal to the point of a departmental inquiry—which should not in this case mean a device for delay—is a matter for congratulation.

Government Decisions

The Government has made a number of small decisions during the recess. It has decided to enforce the law against the tote in clubs, but to wait for the second part of the Commission's report before it makes up its mind about the tote on dog tracks. It has announced that the budgetary prospects do not enable it to restore the cuts in police or service pay, and that, though it cannot afford to feed the British Army on British meat, it can afford, as a contribution to the cause of disarmament, to embark on a new expenditure of £900,000 for Territorial camps. On the general question of saving and spending the

Government is now in an awkward position. Having worked up a highly successful campaign of economy, it finds an overwhelming majority of intelligent opinion in favour of " spending," and is itself an embarrassed advocate of the new campaign proceeding from economists, newspapers, business men and local authorities who are doing their best to undo last year's folly.

The Kenya Scandal

The Kenya debates in the Lords and Commons reduced the Government spokesmen to desperate efforts of evasiveness and disingenuity. No sophistry can hide the simple fact that we deliberately pledged our word to the natives not to disturb their reserved areas for any private purposes and that, on the first occasion of temptation, we have done so. What answer had the Government to the Archbishop's complaint that, without time for consideration or thought of alternatives, we had permitted the Kenya Legislative Council to do away with the provision that land must be given in exchange for land (and then only for specified public purposes)? What reply is it to say that the stolen acreage is small and that the alienation is only for a time? Theft is theft even if it is only a thousand acres that is stolen, and a breach of faith is not less a breach of faith because it is only for a few years. No one seriously believes that the displaced natives will shortly return to farm the land which is being marked out and dug up, and, as for its size, Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister has himself admitted that no one can guess how extensive a new goldfield may prove to be. But the most desperate of all the arguments was the pretence that this mining is for the benefit of the natives of Kenya, or, equally preposterous, for " public purposes." Cases are already reported of £1,000 being picked up by one individual in a day and of £17,000 private profit (the State gets 5 per cent.) being made in three weeks!

The Disarmament Conference

The " French Plan " died after a brief illness in the General Commission of the Disarmament Conference this week. The British Government emphatically refused to be involved in the net of obligations woven for it by the Quai d'Orsay. The Americans treated it with cold indifference. Rumanians and Jugoslavs praised it, indeed, but the Polish delegate, also a friend of France, regretfully admitted that there was no hope of " realising the generous ideas that inspired its authors." M. Paul Boncour's eloquence could do nothing to revivify the corpse. Mr. Litvinov treated the Conference to a great deal of sound sense about the problem of security, and he proposed on behalf of his delegation an elaborate definition of the " aggressor " and a list of grounds on which the invasion of a State by its neighbours should not be held justified. Amongst these were its political, economic or cultural backwardness, its alleged maladministrations, and the possible danger to foreign residents in it. This was realistic enough to amuse his audience, though the words " Japan " and " Manchuria " were not mentioned. But it, and the rest of his plan, is too realistic, we fear, for the Conference to take it seriously.

Austria's Troubles

The Austrian Loan Bill came in for some very warm criticism from all sides of the House of Commons on Tuesday. One member objected that we were pouring £4,000,000 of good British money down the Austrian drain; another said that we were simply being taxed to enable Austria to repay the Bank of England; and another protested that we were not putting Austria on her feet, but keeping her in a state of bankruptcy that made her a useful pawn in French policy. The Foreign Secretary made as good a defence as was possible and he got his majority. But, whatever may be our duty in this particular case, nobody supposes that these doses of expensive and rapidly absorbed stimulant are a real remedy for Austria's trouble. That trouble derives from the Peace Treaties, and it has been aggravated, and continues to be aggravated, by the economic and political policies of all the States of Central Europe. At the moment, however, pity for Austria is mixed with somewhat different feelings. It has been discovered that, in breach of the Treaty of St. Germain, arms have been coming into the country from Italy and going out to Hungary. The Austrian Chancellor has explained that these were merely old weapons which were being reconditioned in Austrian factories, and suggests that it is not worth making a fuss about a trifle of 60,000 old rifles and machine guns. But neither the Little Entente nor the British and French Governments are satisfied, and further explanations are being asked for. It would be interesting to get on oath from Rome, from Budapest, from Sofia and Prague and Belgrade—what of course we shall not get—the whole story of the traffic in war material.

The Budget Fight in France

The new budget proposals are now before the Finance Committee of the French Chamber, and unpalatable though they are they have a better chance of passing than M. Chéron's. The Socialists are naturally less hostile, since large concessions have been made to their views. The attempt to wipe out at one stroke the whole deficit of between £80,000,000 and £90,000,000 is abandoned; the present idea is to reduce it by little more than a half. But even this means increased taxes and cuts in salaries, which are provoking great hostility. The civil servants, who will be among the chief victims, are agitating, and it is possible that the Socialists will support them. Taxpayers, too, are in eruption up and down the country. Meetings and demonstrations are being held, and there is talk of all the shops throughout France being closed for one day next week. That, no doubt, would be impressive, but hardly impressive enough to make M. Daladier and his friends throw up the sponge. It seems pretty clear that more money has got to be found, and that a great part of it can only be found from taxation. This, of course, is realised in France; the trouble is as to who ought to pay. The distribution of the burden which is proposed by MM. Bonnet and Lamoureux may not be ideal; but it does not appear to us to be outrageously unfair to any section of the community.

Untouchability

There is, fortunately, one subject on which the Government and Mr. Gandhi are in substantial agreement —Untouchability. Mr. Gandhi's fast had an immense effect on Hindu opinion, and in a reply in the House of Commons on Tuesday, Sir Samuel Hoare seemed to attribute a fall from 17,145 Congressmen in gaol at the

end of November to 14,815 at the end of December to the diversion of interest among Congressmen to "Mr. Gandhi's campaign against Untouchability." The Viceroy has sanctioned the introduction into the Legislative Assembly of a Bill which should lead to repeal of all the legislation which gives legal sanction to Untouchability. Mr. Gandhi is not altogether satisfied: he wanted to make an attack on Untouchability in Madras, the most difficult Province from this point of view, as well as at the Centre, and he fears that time may be spent on unnecessary discussion and that the enthusiasm engendered by his fast may be wasted. But he welcomes the Government's decision, and there is now every prospect that on this subject, if on no other, the Government of India will continue to co-operate with Mr. Gandhi, who still remains oddly enough in gaol, again seeing visitors and conducting, as the acknowledged leader of millions, a campaign which the Government would be powerless to advance without him.

Dividends And Salaries

It is a commonplace of modern business that the shareholder is not expected to have a conscience about the undertakings in which he invests his money. He cannot play an effective part in the running of the huge concerns in which he has a minute share of ownership; and the practice of spreading investments and of buying and selling shares at frequent intervals in search of windfall profits makes strongly against the shareholders retaining even such interest and sense of responsibility as they used to have. But, as a letter which we publish to-day shows, some shareholders feel that ownership carries moral responsibility with it, and when Mr. Clegg, Secretary of the Bank Officers' Guild, attempted at the recent meetings of the Big Five to protest against the action of the banks in cutting down the salaries of their staffs, at a time when a handsome dividend was being paid, he raised an issue which shareholders cannot altogether ignore. No attempt was made to answer Mr. Clegg's case, the official reply being that questions of the treatment of staff are purely a matter between the directors and the employees, and do not concern the shareholders at all. But clearly there was a case to be answered. Bank clerks are not the worst off class in the community; they have security and some special advantages, but to receive after ten years' service a maximum of £250 a year in London (with substantially lower rates in the provinces) is not very encouraging to men who are expected to be educated men, and to keep up a high standard of middle-class respectability.

The Milk Report

The Milk Report, on which the Government will presumably take action, is mainly concerned with promoting the better production and marketing of milk on the basis of collective bargaining between the producers and the distributing traders. But milk is used in manufacture as well as for liquid consumption; and a vital point of the problem is to find means of compensating those producers whose milk has to be sold at low prices to the manufacturing trades. For some time past farmers and distributors have attempted to bargain collectively about milk prices; but in the absence of any inclusive organisation on either side it has been impossible to strike a satisfactory bargain, or to secure general observance of its terms. There is now, accordingly, to be a scheme, based broadly on Dr. Addison's Marketing Act, under which all producers and dealers are to be registered and organised into two inclusive bodies, with a joint body, under an impartial chairman, to adjust differences between them. In effect, the milk trade is to be given compulsory powers under self-governing conditions, the safeguarding of the consumers' interests resting with the Chairman and the other appointed members of the proposed Joint Milk Council. It is difficult to say how the plan will work. Everyone agrees that the milk trade needs organisation, and that there ought to be room for the producers to get a better return without a rise in retail prices. But whether the joint action of farmers and distributors, with power of compulsion at their call, will secure this remains to be seen. On the whole, the plan will be welcomed as an experiment and its working watched with interest, and not without anxiety, by the consuming public.

Unemployment Rising

The figures for January show a serious increase in unemployment. Despite tariffs and exchange depreciation, the numbers in employment are estimated at 76,000 less than a year ago, and the registered unemployed are up by nearly 180,000, though the effect of the Means Test must have been to make the register less inclusive than before. This is a serious situation, which cannot be dismissed as due to merely seasonal causes. It can no doubt be shown that over the past year employment has shrunk less in Great Britain than in a number of other countries; and it is certainly true that the situation would have been appreciably worse if the gold standard had been still in operation. But it is also clear that the recent growth in unemployment has been due, at least in part, to causes well within our own control. The rise has been especially marked in the building and constructional trades, which are the chief victims of the policy of national "economy." Even those who hold that the decline of world trade is being to some extent arrested do not hold out any hope of substantial improvement in the near future, and we can look for no material expansion of employment from this source. If we want to get men back to work the best way—the only way—is to re-start productive spending through the State and the local authorities, and thus to stop the process of public deflation against which the expanded supply of idle bank money is impotent to make ground.

A Student Demonstration

A mass demonstration of students, parents and teachers has been arranged for February 17th to protest against the Government's education policy. A London Students' Committee was set up at a meeting last November—a meeting which was so enthusiastic that it was with great difficulty prevented from there and then marching on the House of Commons! Now, after several months of organisation, the National Association of Schoolmasters, the National Union of Women Teachers, the National Union of Teachers, and the Assistant Masters' and Mistresses' Associations are all supporting the demonstration. A joint procession is planned to meet at Blackfriars Bridge at 6.0 and proceed to a meeting in Friends' House, Euston, at 7.0.

THE LEAGUE AND JAPAN

It is now some seventeen months since the Japanese started on their great adventure of conquering China, in violation of covenants and treaties and in defiance of world opinion. For seventeen months the League of Nations has shown an almost incredible patience in dealing with this international crime. But there are limits to human endurance—even to the superhuman endurance of Sir John Simon—and at long last the League is preparing to pass judgment on the aggressor. It is idle to pretend that this is anybody's fault but Japan's. Mr. Matsuoka makes himself a laughing stock when he talks, as he did the other day, of Japan being forced out of the League, of the rejection of her conciliatory proposals, and of her devotion to the Covenant. The facts are plain, however the Japanese or their champions abroad may lie about them. The Japanese armies have invaded China. They hold three provinces in Manchuria under the thinnest of camouflages, and they are engaged in the seizure of a fourth. They have refused the reasonable, and indeed generous, plans put forward by the Lytton Commission for safeguarding their legitimate interests. Their own so-called "conciliatory proposals" are that they shall be confirmed in the possession of what they have already filched, and be given a free hand to filch more. Their withdrawal from the League, if they do withdraw, will be their own deliberate choice.

To concede their claims would quite obviously be to ring the death-knell of the League and of all the League stands for. That would no doubt result in the dropping of a few crocodile tears in Tokio, but it would not break the Japanese heart. And in this country it would be welcomed by that section of opinion which either is not concerned about peace or imagines that it can be ensured by the principle of might is right. Few of this way of thinking, of course, have the hardihood to profess such a principle openly. Being Englishmen, they must have moral grounds for their prejudices. And so we are deluged in the Tory press with a stream of canting arguments in favour of Japanese *Realpolitik* and British acquiescence. The Chinese, we are told, are hopelessly incompetent; the Japanese are heaven-born administrators. The new State of Manchukuo is not merely a guarantee of order and progress; its establishment was a piece of altruism on the part of Japan, who at a heavy cost to herself liberated the oppressed Manchus from their chains. Under the new regime only 33,000,000 dollars are raised in taxation for military purposes, as compared with 110,000,000 in the bad old days of the Chinese War Lords. The article which so unctuously imparts that information does not refer to the fact that the Japanese forces stationed in Manchukuo are not paid for entirely out of the Manchukuo exchequer. But the cat is let out of the bag in other columns, where we read of the furious pace of military preparations in Japan and of the burden on the Japanese budget. Then there are the appeals for gratitude and loyalty to "our old friend Japan"—the speciality, this, of the *Daily Mail*—coupled with abuse of Geneva. And finally we get pure snivel. "Far stronger," we are told in one evening paper, "than any economic urge is the sentimental reason for Japan's interest in Manchuria. . . . *One hundred thousand Japanese families mourn the loss of members killed in the Russo-Japanese war. The dead lie buried in Manchuria. Their graves are sacred.*" We refrain from commenting on this—save only to observe that the italics are not ours, and that the same article contains one still more priceless gem. It tells us of "the pride which every Japanese takes in the fact that King George is a Field-Marshal of the Japanese army, and that the Emperor of Japan is the third consecutive Japanese Emperor to be a Knight of the Garter." Oh, Fleet Street!

But all this balderdash will have little effect now. Japan's intransigence has forced the League's hands, and the statesmen at Geneva must willy nilly defend the principles about which they have been so timid hitherto. It is deplorable that they could not bring themselves up to this point a year or more ago. If they had, they might have averted great mischief and misery. If they had not succeeded in bringing Japan to her senses on the instant, they would at least have made the solution of the Manchurian problem far easier than it is likely to be to-day. But it is no use crying over spilt milk; we must be thankful for this belated access of virtue and sanity, which does at any rate give us some grounds for hope. What, then, will Japan do, when she has got a black mark against her instead of the whitewash she has demanded? It is possible, but highly improbable, that she will capitulate. It is also highly improbable, we think, that she will immediately run amok. A censure of the League and a refusal to recognise Manchukuo do not constitute a declaration of war, and the excited talk of Mr. Matsuoka and his journalist friends can be taken with a liberal pinch of salt. For our own part we never shared the fear of offending Japan which has so obsessed the British Government. At an earlier stage in this dispute, when the Powers were being urged to be a little more like lions and a little less like rabbits, the answer that came in a terrified whisper from Whitehall was: "Think of the strength of the Japanese navy, and the weakness of the British and American fleets in the Pacific. Think of Singapore, and Hong Kong." We have thought of those things and we think of them now. But we refuse to believe that the maddest militarist in Japan would contemplate blowing up Hongkong as a riposte for a vote of censure on his country. We do not believe in this danger of an attack on Hongkong, even if the vote of censure led on to economic sanctions. The Japanese may have grown in confidence, as they have certainly grown in arrogance. But they are far too shrewd a people to pit themselves against the world and to ensure their own destruction by a childish escapade. What they may be prepared to do ultimately, we do not know. What they want at present is plain enough; it is to continue their encroachment on China, without embroiling themselves with the League Powers or with the United States or with Soviet Russia. And that they may very well think they can do, despite the disapproval of the League, and provided that the disapproval goes no farther than a pious resolution.

The question of sanctions will then have to be faced. If the League has condemned Japanese aggression, refused to recognise Manchukuo, and asserted the sovereign rights of China, and the Japanese take no notice of all this, can the matter be left there? From the moral point of view it cannot; the obligations of the Covenant are plain. But on grounds of expediency we have no doubt that

every effort will be made to avoid worsening the situation. If that means genuine and new efforts—a real pressure—to reverse the Japanese policy and to reach a fair settlement, well and good. We do not want to see all the sanctions of Article XVI rigorously and instantly applied. But if the Japanese persist in scouting every friendly advance, every offer of mediation; if they have enough arms and ammunition of their own, without importing them from Europe, to go on fighting in China; then sanctions will not worsen the situation. They will be the only means of saving it. Japan's great adventure is a creeping cancer. It has already taken a huge toll of lives in the Far East. It has only brought the flimsiest pretence of peace in Manchuria. Its continuance means war in China, and a war into which in the end the rest of us will be dragged.

THE NAZI HEAVEN

FROM OUR BERLIN CORRESPONDENT

THIS is the Year One—according to current Nazi inscriptions—of "Das Dritte Reich," or the Nazi Kingdom of Heaven on earth. How can this be? What can it mean? Only in November the reactionary Papen Government was checkmated by the threat of a general strike, while the Nazis had lost two million voters in the Reichstag election; adversity at that time brought no sign of alliance. The conciliatory Schleicher Government took office, and the most competent judges—among those who dread civil war—breathed a sigh of relief. It may prove to be one of the tragedies of history that General von Schleicher had learnt wisdom too late to make effectual use of it; he lost confidence on the Right before he could gain it on the Left. In deference to the dictates of social justice, or at least of social need, Schleicher reverted to the principles of Brüning. The attack on wages was called off, and the settlement of unemployed upon the most desperately bankrupt estates of East Prussia was pursued. No just analysis of the present position can be made without considering the land question. The East Prussian Junkers were the celebrated backbone of the Hohenzollern Monarchy; not even Frederick the Great dared snap his own spine and attack their hold upon land and peasants, and Stein's emancipation law was notoriously a dead letter. The Republic has tried to humour these gentlemen; by over-protecting their produce it foolishly helped them to produce too much, then established the "Eastern Relief" organisation to pay them further tribute. With the growth of urban distress this spoon-feeding had to be limited and the settlement policy evolved. When Brüning attempted to insist upon this, there was an outcry against the Hidden Hand of Moscow clasped in that of Rome. Schleicher was innocent of Catholicism, but quickly damned as Marxist.

The Prussian Junkers are not afraid of sabotage and intrigue; they were able to influence the administration of Eastern Relief, and they resorted to behaviour which, on being examined by the Budget Committee of the Reichstag just after Christmas, was revealed to have been scandalous. But the Junkers were altogether unashamed, for while they have an exalted and not entirely unjustifiable notion of their own social worth, many of them have a genuinely feudal mentality. Land-owning is to them an inalienable right; it does not relate to money, and indebtedness therefore means nothing to them (only "Minusmenschen" like Jews are concerned with sordid notions of such a kind).

Throughout January the President was overwhelmed with indignant intrigue. The fact that on his eightieth birthday the Junkers had arranged that he should—in the rather doubtful circumstances recently emphasised by Ludendorff—be presented with the East Prussian estate of Neudeck, emphasised his penchant in their favour. His growing senility and personal tastes were richly exploited, and Schleicher found the Presidential doors closed to him. It was interesting to hear a Brüningite, with unrivalled knowledge of the circumstances in which the last three Chancellors fell, observe that Schleicher was treated six times worse than Brüning. With the "up-to-date" General fell the last semblance of Government by consent. "You see, he was a rational man," one Junker complained to me in disgust.

Meanwhile the Papen-Hugenberg-Junker plotters were conspiring for Hitler's co-operation, which, by robbing the workers of Nazi support, would emasculate the threat of a general strike. It seems probable that the industrialists were enlisted to alleviate Hitler's indebtedness. Yet only by the notorious Putsch rumours admittedly circulated by the Herrenklub aided by the correspondent of the *Daily Express*—the unfounded implication that Schleicher and the Army were about to seize political power—was Papen able to overcome the Nazi leader's resistance.

On January 30th the Government of national concentration was established. The Nationalists were able to concentrate all the economic jobs, both in the Reich and in Prussia, in the hands of the incorrigible Hugenberg; the conflict between agrarian and industrial interests was to be ended by making Hugenberg responsible for both. The President kept his own nominees at the Treasury and the Foreign Office, and replaced Schleicher at the Defence Ministry by General von Blomberg. While the Nazis were bought off with the Chancellorship and the power to persecute their political opponents from the Ministries of the Interior in Reich and Prussia, the office of Vice-Chancellor was revived—as a check upon the Chancellor—in favour of the nationally discredited Papen, who is still the favourite of the Hindenburgs, father and son. The spirit of the new Cabinet was perfectly expressed by the appointment of Seldte, mineral water manufacturer and leader of the Stahlhelm, to the Ministry of Labour.

At first the impression prevailed that Hitler had again been tricked by the Die-hards, but already doubts are arising lest they have bitten off more than they can swallow. The first week of paradise has brought the wholesale eviction of all kinds of officials in favour of the Government parties, the precipitation of election campaigns in Reich and Prussia, and something more than the restoration of the Papen Government's decrees for the suppression of public meetings and newspapers. Beyond that there has been a skilfully organised Nazi stampede of the nation, by a dexterous combination of honeyed words from Hitler with the seduction of pageantry against a background of terrorism. The Chancellor's new slogan of two Four Year Plans was an unblushing demand for irresponsible power. Meanwhile frank murders of Socialists and Communists go unpunished; the now official Nazi press has a superb technique by which these crimes are presented as the splendid actions of provoked heroes. "Preussen frei," by the way, was the headline, when the Prussian Landtag was unconstitutionally dissolved on Monday.

The perfection of Nazi ritual culminated in the State funeral of Maikowski and Zauritz on Sunday. Maikowski was what we should call a gangster; he was the member of Storm troop 33, notorious for its "toughness"; he had confessed to the murder of a Communist in "self-defence." He had been amnestied during the Schleicher regime and was shot by a Communist on his return from the Nazi Torchlight procession on January 30th. In the same Nazi-Communist scuffle a policeman, Zauritz, was mortally wounded; the available evidence suggests that a Nazi, not a Communist, was responsible for his death. With their extraordinary flair for the dramatic exploitation of social emotion, the Nazis decreed that there should be a double State funeral, although only Ebert, Stresemann and Müller have been honoured in this way since 1918. Hitherto the Prussian police have been good Republicans, and Zauritz was well loved by working men, as the Commnuist wreaths placed where he fell have shown, but his family felt powerless, they said, to modify the official plan.

It was indeed a clever device by which the nuptials of Nazis and police could be bravely celebrated, and one saw a new occurrence—policemen giving the Fascist salute while the Storm troops paraded outside the cathedral; it seemed, perhaps, too difficult to risk dismissal by Göring (Nazi Commissioner for the Interior in Prussia) while the magnificent Swastika banners were passing. The Protestant Church of Germany, disestablished by the Revolution, has long had Nazi sympathies, but never before has she so completely sealed her submission to Hitlerism. Only it seemed strange that Christ should hang upon a cross above Maikowski—Odin, or even Loki, would have looked less out of place. Lastly came Monarchy to woo Hitlerism; the Crown Prince, mounting the altar steps to add his to the piles of wreaths, took care to be the most prominent individual inside the cathedral. And the crowds at last went home, satisfied that "Germany is awake." It would be absurd to ignore the sincerity of the spectators; they believe that Socialists or pacifists are inferior beings, whom, in the interest of "Das Dritte"—or should I say "Das Heilige Rassische Reich" (The Holy Racial State)?—it is justifiable to coerce morally, and, in the last case, mortally. This is the Communist view of the Bourgeois, no doubt; yet one longed a little for a Voltairean pen to denounce a new "Infâme."

The last moment capture of power, by men who were thought—by the most cautious and informed observers—to be too much discredited to have a political future, has created in Germany a more efficient reactionary machine than ever existed in pre-war Russia. One searches almost in vain for any ray of hope. The Socialists and the Trade Unions are far too pessimistic and afraid. The Communists, who will probably be officially suppressed just before or just after the elections of March 5th, have an almost puerile faith in the wonders to be worked by the mere solidarity of unarmed workers. Quarrels within the Cabinet, or between Hugenberg and the Reichsbank over high protection and the defence of the currency, while they appear imminent, may not lessen the reactionary hold on executive government. The Centre Party and the South Germans are showing some mettle, and the press is still fairly free in Munich. Ultimately the Reichswehr may yet be a decisive factor, and there are some whose hope rests there. Blomberg is reputed to be a man of integrity, and when Schleicher took leave of the Army he took care to remind the soldiers that they should never forget to help and serve "alle Volkschichten."

A LONDON DIARY

THOUGH all sections of the Labour movement were well represented on the platforms in Hyde Park on Sunday, and though Wal Hannington and other Communists recently released from prison spoke with singular directness and effect, the oratory as a whole seemed to me pitifully inadequate to express the indignation and convictions of the meeting. I soon forgot that the most conspicuous object was a large tent adorned with an advertisement for somebody's Ales and Stouts: my attention was drawn to a group of children of nine or ten years old who chanted over and over again, "We are the children of the working class; down with the ruling class." The vast orderly procession was superlatively impressive. The whole of Piccadilly was for hours crimson with banners, blown horizontal and sometimes ribboned by the wind, while an apparently interminable column of men and women marched rapidly westward. From a club window a group of white-clad chefs looked down on the passing placards marked "We will not starve in the midst of plenty." A priest in a cassock swung along beside a crucifix painted red; not far from him was a boy carrying the Hammer and the Sickle. The naive mid-Victorian paintings on some of the Trade Union banners made incongruous symbols for this formidable congregation of a justly embittered class. The more revolutionary groups carried placards calling for the release of the Meerut prisoners—surely a triumph of the ideology and international solidarity in a demonstration from the impoverished homes of East and South and North London.

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The proportion of Communists has been variously estimated; enthusiasts even suggest that a quarter to a third of the demonstrators were "conscious revolutionaries," but in a procession probably numbering more than 100,000 persons such an estimate seems too generous. Indeed it is difficult to make a significant estimate, since the word revolutionary covers an endless gradation from the pukka Communist to the Socialist Leaguer who likes to be thought revolutionary. I looked at every banner from Charing Cross to Blackfriars Bridge, and it seemed to me that the Trade Unions were very strongly represented, that the local Labour Parties were weak, and that such revolutionary groups as the Minority Movement, whatever their proportion of the whole, were there in very full force. But the striking fact is that the Communists were there, marching with the mass of Trade Unionists. I understand that some of the more orthodox organisers of the demonstration, fearing a repetition of the events of the hunger marchers' demonstration, were at first anxious to exclude Communists from the procession, but that they were warned that the result was likely to be that the Communists would demonstrate alone, and that, in the event of any clash between them and the police, many of the rank and file of Trade Unionists would rally to the side of the Communists. The policy of the "united front" was abundantly justified by the perfect orderliness of the whole assembly. I saw almost as many ambulance-men as police—the majority of the latter were very wisely either in plain clothes or out of sight. The demonstration will not affect the Government, who have come to regard unemployment with public optimism and private fatalism; but in face of this multitudinous representation of national suffering many of the spectators may have been driven nearer to perceiving that capitalism is condemned not by its theories but by its facts.

* * *

Since reading Mr. Pritt's remarkable chapter in *Twelve Studies of Russia* (Gollancz, 5s.), I have ceased to fear that he would be made a judge. He is obviously reserved for an even more distinguished fate. The legal profession in England has provided very few law reformers and even fewer critics of the assumptions on which British law is built. Since Bentham it is difficult to think of any English lawyer who has gone to the root of the matter; and Bentham, unlike Mr. Pritt, was not a practising barrister and a K.C. No one can say that Mr. Pritt, who stands at the head of his profession, does not know what he is talking about when he discusses the circumlocutions, the waste and the class bias of English law. His criticism of the legal system in England will therefore probably attract more attention than his very clear exposition of the system at work in Soviet Russia. I could have wished that some of the other writers in this book (who went out as specialists to investigate each a particular aspect of Soviet organisation) had followed Mr. Pritt more closely in giving a detailed and factual account. Several of them have interesting things to tell us, but since the book is by specialists a more "blue booky" book would have been in place. But the book must, I think, have one important result. Mr. Pritt having dared to say so much in summary form is now under a clear obligation to go on to a longer study of the working of English justice—and that, when he does so, will be an event of very great importance.

* * *

I knew how it would be if I dared to say that some animal-lovers lacked a sense of proportion. Let me assure my various correspondents first that I am not guilty of "sneering" at their activities in favour of better treatment for animals; on the contrary, I hold that their agitation on the subject is the best proof that we are, as a nation, less deplorably apathetic than some other nations towards animal suffering. Secondly, I never said or thought, as one correspondent suggests, that a man's attitude to human beings is "uninfluenced by his attitude to animals"—indeed, I gave a striking example of

the contrary fact. I agree (*a*) that our failure to make humane slaughtering compulsory is a scandal, and (*b*) that if women who wear certain kinds of fur realised how the animals were trapped one of the most horrible of trades would disappear. Finally, may I explain that in protesting against the suggestion that men who torture animals should themselves be tortured, I was protesting against torture of all kinds, not arguing that cruelty to animals should go unpunished?

* * *

Manchester City Council has refused to permit *The Outline for Boys and Girls and their Parents*, edited by Naomi Mitchison, to be made available for juvenile readers. One councillor is reported to have said that it was "a thing of the Middle Ages," and that if he had read this book when he was eighteen, he would not be a married man to-day.

* * *

I read in the Woman's Page of one of our more reputable dailies an account of a Society mother who is advised not to rush her daughter "into good works. Let her be young for a while and gradually interest her in other things." Apart from dancing every night during the London Season, the debutante is therefore to do "some social work, probably at a girls' club," to spend "some of her evenings at home with the family 'in the good old way' and to *take up shorthand typing or music to equip her for emergencies* (this, they consider, is the parent's duty)."

* * *

Thus the stormy petrel of German politics . . . is at last in the saddle.—Evening paper on Hitler.

* * *

To judge by the latest reports from Tokio, Japan is maintaining a very patient attitude towards the proceedings of the League at Geneva.—Daily paper.

* * *

They stood inches apart. Tony felt the sensuous effluvia of Laura's charm creeping over him like late shadows over a meadow. Without turning, and in a low voice, he murmured an answer to her question: "I'm in love with you!"—*A thrilling, gripping story.*—Announcement of magazine story.

* * *

A correspondent in the *Times* referring "to the verminous characteristic of hedgehogs" writes: It may interest your readers to know a remedy for this trouble which I have found very effective. Shake Keating's Powder all over the animal, protecting eyes and nose. Cover the animal with flannel and put it in a basket for 15 minutes. The insects will then be stupefied and mostly transferred to the flannel. Any remaining can easily be removed with an orange stick. To complete the treatment immerse the animal in warm water containing a tablespoonful of Condy's fluid. Dry with a soft towel and give a saucer of warm milk. My hedgehog mixed with dogs and cats, but I had no further trouble. CRITIC

A NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION

[*The announcement by the Minister of Health that he will set up a Departmental Committee to inquire into the proposal to create a National Housing Corporation adds immediate interest to Sir Raymond Unwin's article and to this series as a whole. Other contributors will include Sir Harold Bellman, of the Abbey Road Building Society, Mr. R. Coppock, General Secretary of the National Federation of Building Trades Operatives, and Mr. Sprague, Economic Adviser to the Bank of England.*—ED., N. S. & N.]

IN his article in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION last week Mr. Keynes supports the proposal that a National Public Utility Housing Board should be created competent to make a planned effort to solve the housing problem. It is an old and complex problem, by no means to be solved by merely building houses where they will readily sell. There is first the question of actual shortage in numbers; that deficiency was aggravated, not created, by the cessation of house building during the war. It was partly caused by poverty, which induces people to live in one or two rooms, rather than pay for a whole house. Partly, however, it is due to the motive power of private enterprise. Builders can afford to build houses only when reasonable certainty exists that they can be sold promptly to yield a margin of profit. Investors will only buy houses when there is good prospect that they can be let at remunerative rents. A surplus of dwellings, beyond the immediate remunerative demand, such as are needed if overcrowded families are to be taken out of their single rooms, obviously cannot be provided on private enterprise terms. Indeed, if such surplus were not controlled it would prove a menace to those terms, and, by lowering the value, arrest the building of small dwellings. For those who can, and will, afford the profit margin which stimulates the building of houses speculatively, the system works, except in the matter of design. Considering the long, unbroken traditions of beautiful house building in this country, the very low ebb to which speculative building has reduced the design of dwellings during the last few generations is a result as discreditable as it is remarkable.

For those who have no profit margin to offer, private enterprise does not function. In America the present realisation of acute difficulty in the large cities has only been postponed by rapid changes, which have made available for poorer people an unusual number of larger houses, the leavings of better-to-do folk. This is true also in London to a larger degree than is realised; for nearly two-thirds of the families are living two, three or more to a dwelling originally built for single family occupancy. Such wholesale deterioration of property can hardly be economical. The short term consideration of profit to be made on the first sale, which mainly determines the building of dwellings, has but too little necessary connection with the long term return in rent on which real economic value depends. If the experience of the last half-century may be taken as a guide, small house property, over the long period of its life, is likely to show a very good return on its cost. Types of house now regularly let at 7s. 6d. and 10s. per week, or more, were letting new forty years ago at at 3s. 6d. and 5s. They are to-day paying a good return on the original outlay. Apart from actual slum clearance, I believe that the complete solution of the housing problem would, if the long term view were taken, prove a sound investment, even though the immediate return might not always be quite adequate.

Before slum clearance can be effectively dealt with there must be spare dwellings. So long as the people at a party exceed the chairs by even one, any rearrangement is difficult; with one spare chair the problems of the hostess become simple. A carefully worked out plan for the new dwellings co-ordinated with slum clearance is needed. The spare houses must be under proper control and not be thrown into the common pool to slump the value of the whole. Clearly this is not a sphere in which private enterprise can operate.

There are two alternatives. Direct action by local authorities, or the creation of a suitable public utility organisation. As regards the former, desirable as it is to free housing from the direct influence and see-saw of party government, it is hardly less so to free its details from local politics. Councillors should not be placed in a position in which a considerable proportion of their electors are direct tenants of the Council, and liable to give their votes with quite undue regard to the candidates' views on rents or repairs.

Frequently also local government areas are not those within which a comprehensive handling of the housing problem is possible. Indeed, the extensive migrations revealed by the last census, such as the 400,000 persons who have moved into the London region, suggest that national co-ordination has become necessary.

Perhaps the strongest argument in favour of some other agency being available, to co-operate with or act on behalf of local authorities, arises from the nature of much of the work to be accomplished, which is really social in character. This calls for both social enthusiasm and business training. Skilled managers of house property are needed who can assist tenants

to forsake the habits formed in overcrowded one- or two-roomed tenements, and help them to use the opportunities for cleanliness and decent living offered by the new dwellings.

The reconditioning of houses which, though old and out of repair, do not quite fall to the level of unfit dwellings presents another special problem. Some will pay for doing up; others must in any case be used for many years, if only because of the complete impossibility of clearing up the whole problem in less time. Pressure on the owners will do something; but many of them are themselves without margin of means to expend on the work. In such cases to force the work on them might only add them to the destitute. The alternatives are purchase of the property, or taking over its management on a quasi-trustee basis. This is work which could be handled more readily by or through a public utility body than by the local authorities acting directly. Such a body acting in accord with local authorities or, where they wish it, acting on their behalf, should be endowed with the full powers necessary for such action. It should be able to build, own and manage houses for the classes of the community who cannot, or will not, provide the financial inducement through which private enterprise operates. It must assist the former by the lowest possible rents, and help the latter to realise the necessity for paying an adequate rent for the minimum accommodation consistent with decent living. Is not this as necessary for the children's welfare and that of our race as education, which has long been assumed as a social responsibility and charge? The Board must be able to recondition houses, some of which may not be intrinsically worth the outlay, and for this purpose to purchase the property or to act on behalf of owners who are unable to undertake the work themselves. It must be able to co-operate with the town planning authority, and in large towns it may be able to assist the decentralisation of industry by providing some of the housing needed for the lower paid workers. It must apply the enlightened and sympathetic management of small property, which encourages the will to pay a reasonable rent and educates the old slum occupant of a single room to use and value the extra space and conveniences.

This is work which will need to be controlled and guided by a strong Board, including exceptionally able business men who will inspire complete confidence in its finances, as well as men who are willing to work hard for the removal from our civilisation of this most serious evil of slums and overcrowding.

The passing away of the inflated rates of interest and of the artificially high costs of building has opened up the possibility for a new concerted effort on the lines suggested. Other conditions too are favourable.

House building is a home industry; apart from some timber, the materials needed are found and made at home. It does not disturb foreign exchange or the balance of foreign trade. It distributes the capital outlay in purchasing power widely through the community, while creating valuable national assets which will yield a regular revenue for fifty or one hundred years. About 20 per cent. of the cost of every extra house erected is directly saved to the country in unemployment relief. Over a quarter of a million men, skilled in all branches of the work, are kicking their heels in idleness, and, in spite of unemployment relief, are deteriorating in condition, spending their savings to eke out an inadequate pittance, and quite unable to give their children a fair chance in life. Money and credits also are plentiful. The banks are glutted with deposits; so are the building societies. Finally the need for more houses for those less able to pay remains as great as ever. In spite of all that have been erected since the war, the 1931 census returns show that the increase in the number of separate dwellings since 1921 has barely kept pace with the increase in the number of families. Probably some little of this increase in separate families occurred before 1921, not having been recorded because many new family units were still living at home. This correction, while helping the last intercensus decade, but transfers the increased shortage to the war decade. The important consideration is that in housing it is the family unit which counts, not the number of persons. We cannot allocate people to dwellings, so many per house, like cattle to railway trucks. The number of separate families into which each thousand of the population must be divided has been steadily increasing. In London in 1911 it was 241, and in 1931, 289. This cause alone if it should operate in like degree throughout would account for a need of one and three-quarter million extra houses since 1911, apart from that due to the actual increase in population or any reduction of the special war shortage. The need for new dwellings for those less able to pay a rent large enough to stimulate private enterprise is therefore both urgent and extensive.

In the provision of enough decent houses for all our families there is surely to be found one of the least doubtful forms of expenditure; one that will spread widely a large volume of new purchasing power, and will therefore directly and indirectly stimulate other industries; at the same time the capital assets of the country will be increased to the equivalent value, and in a form which, so far as new buildings and repairs are concerned, is fairly safe, over a long period, to yield an adequate revenue. Actual slum clearance is still to be assisted by the Government and local authorities under the 1930 Act. Public utility societies have proved their capacity by doing even this class of work on a limited scale during the period of difficulty that has now passed away.

In view of the direct and substantial saving in unemployment pay which would result from every additional dwelling provided through the means of a National Housing Board, it would seem to be a very sound project on the part of the Government to give such a guarantee of the capital for such a body as would ensure a low rate of interest.

After being announced as speaking for the architects, perhaps I may seem to have departed from their special point of view. The advantage of planning, and of bringing parts into proper relations to some result to be attained, is, however, one of the fundamental lessons which the architect learns as a designer. As a member of the building industry he is greatly concerned also at the sad plight of so many good men in all its branches who are now unemployed. Post-war housing has proved to him also that under modern conditions the best chance to secure extensive small house building, in a manner that will not further disfigure the towns and country, is through co-ordinated schemes on well laid out sites. However disappointing in the standard of design a few of the municipal housing projects may seem to the architect, seldom can he look at an adjacent small house area developed speculatively but he is confronted with a worse result. Finally, the architect needs an understanding public. The basis of that must be a decent home for each family. Perhaps after all the architect's point of view is essentially covered. RAYMOND UNWIN

BOWLERS AND BARGAINS

(Deductions from the M.C.C. Conference with Mr. J. H. Thomas)

SOME folks seem to be astonished, but it doesn't startle me
To discover Jimmie Thomas chatting with the M.C.C.;
For an Empire-builder's duty is by any means to seek
Fresh and up-to-date improvements in Imperial technique.

Now we know that Larwood's bowling may affect the fate of nations,
And that leg-traps may imperil our Imperial relations,
He, our master-hand at bargains, must be hungering to wield
All the diplomatic assets lurking in the cricket field.

Dimly one can see the process—say that British exports fall:
"If you'll give us further preference, Larwood shall not bowl at all."
While if meat should be in question, then experience suggests
An increased Australian quota, in return for four-day Tests.

But while thus employing cricket to cement the Commonwealth,
We shall make it clear that Britons don't play cricket for their health;
If a Test Match should be cancelled, we shall tax at higher rate
All Australia has to send us, to recoup the vanished "gate."

So the weapons that have banished unemployment from our land
And impressed the Irish voter with the weight of Britain's hand
Shall be sharpened and perfected—that is how it seems to me—
By the aid of Jimmie Thomas, Larwood, and the M.C.C.

MACFLECKNOE

THE DOUBLE COCONUT

A LETTER from Sir Arthur Hill in Tuesday's *Times* will seem to many people to show how wide a gulf separates the present age from the nineteenth century. Writing on the subject of the Gordon anniversary, Sir Arthur refers to General Gordon's botanical studies and tells us that he was particularly interested in attempts to identify the Forbidden Fruit in the Garden of Eden. "This he believed to be the double coconut (*Lodoacea Sechellarum*), the remarkable Seychelles palm whose huge fruits are often washed ashore on the shores of the Indian Ocean, Zanzibar, Sumatra, etc. The ripe fruit," we are told, "when fresh, weighs from 40 lb. to 50 lb. and takes some years to ripen." Gordon not only made drawings of this monstrous fruit and of the bread fruit which he believed to be the Tree of Life—drawings presented after his death to Kew—but sent the complete fruit of the double coconut to the authorities at Kew Gardens, in order, presumably, that English men and women might see to how unworthy a temptation our first parents succumbed.

It is difficult to imagine any Christian to-day toiling over the problem whether Eve was tempted by an apple or a coconut. Bishop Barnes does not address his scientific mind to the dendrology of Eden. The Buchmanites are content to leave Eve's diet an open question. Many churchgoers doubt whether either Eve or the Garden of Eden ever existed and look on the first chapters of Genesis as fiction that has come down from the infancy of the world. They have ceased to believe, as we once believed, that the day on which Eve ate the apple—or the double coconut—was the second most critical day in the history of the human race and that the battles of Waterloo and the Somme were trifles in comparison with Adam's decision to eat his share of the fruit. Adam and Eve's behaviour in the orchards of Eden has now become a theme for the composers of foxtrots.

It was not ever thus. That scene in Eden was as real to me in childhood as King William's triumph at the Boyne or Roberts's march to Kandahar. I can remember weeping tears of helpless rage in the watches of the night over the imbecility of a woman who could condemn all my relations to death merely because she was unable to deny herself a bite of an apple. It speaks well for the humanity of the male sex that, in spite of the general acceptance of the story of Eve's guilt, we did not all grow up confirmed misogynists. Even then, I suppose, we found Eve exasperating rather than hateful. For some reason or other we looked on the serpent as a peculiarly difficult animal to resist, and we almost forgave Eve in our withering contempt for Adam and his unmanly effort to put the entire blame for their folly on her shoulders. I then thought of Adam as an Englishman somewhat inadequately clad, but at the same time, judging from the books I had read, I felt that his conduct on this occasion was curiously un-English. If an Englishman had written the Book of Genesis Adam, in a fine burst of chivalry, would have taken the burden of the crime on himself and would have explained that the woman knew nothing whatever about it. Is it not possible that in that case the curtain would have fallen on a scene of general forgiveness and that our race might have been left to enjoy the amenities of Eden in perpetuity?

Un-English though the behaviour of Adam was, however, he and Eve lived in remarkably English surroundings. The apple that they shared was a rosy English apple, and, however much one blamed Eve, one could understand the strength of her temptation. If one had been told—as has been maintained by the learned—that the forbidden fruit was a tomato, her folly would have seemed unintelligible. The tomato is not a fruit that makes a child's eyes brighten, and it would have been impossible to believe that any sane woman would have forgone immortality for the sake of a tomato. There is more to be said on behalf of the coconut. The coconut appeals to what is most primitive in our palate. The highly civilised dislike its flavour, but every Bank Holiday shows that the primitive men in our midst still regard it as the prize among the world's fruits. Those whose merchandise it is on holiday heaths have themselves the appearance of the members of a head-hunting tribe, and the fruits they expose look like the dried-up heads of their victims. Never was there a fruit less likely to attract the eye of a cultured aristocrat, but at sight of it does not a certain nostalgia for the tree-tops awaken even in the soul of an archbishop? The evolutionist will find no difficulty in believing that this was the whiskered fruit that undid our first parents.

At the same time there are some difficulties in believing that the forbidden fruit was the double coconut. Eve, no doubt, was a woman of enormous physical strength, but it is not easy to imagine her lightly handling a fruit that weighed between three and four stone. Besides, there is something gluttonous in the choice of a fruit so elephantine. Eve ceases to be an Englishwoman as she gorges herself on this savage diet. On the other hand, we know from the history of modern America that, if a thing is forbidden, however repellent it may be, human beings must have it. Bad whisky that is prohibited is apparently more tempting than good whisky that the Law allows to be sold. If a ban were put on the sale of double coconuts, no doubt our friends would all be offering them to us as table luxuries.

For myself, I prefer to believe that the forbidden fruit was an apple. I dislike the emendation of old stories. It gives me no pleasure to be told that Cinderella's glass slipper was really a slipper made of some kind of leather. On the other hand, the human mind is moved by a restless desire for change. It cannot leave the oldest stories alone, but busies itself to discover new sites even for the Garden of Eden. I do not know where the Garden of Eden lay, but I object to being told that it was somewhere in Abyssinia. An Eden that does not lie north of the Red Sea is a withered garden for me. In the same way, I have no wish to trace the wanderings of Odysseus on a real map under the guidance of a learned geographer. In such matters pleasant lies are better than what has the appearance of dull truth. If tradition says a thing happened in a certain place, I believe it—for the time being. If a learned man says so, I doubt him. I make no protest against the incursions of scholars into the world of myths, but, on the whole, I do not care for their company. A scholar has recently asserted that the Walls of Jericho did actually fall about the time stated in the Bible, but that they fell, not because of a miracle, but because of an earthquake. That is all very well, but the trumpets make a better story. Similarly, the more historical a character King Arthur is made the less real a character he becomes. From Cornwall to Guildford geography triumphs over fiction and we substitute the inquisitiveness of the brain for the credulity of the imagination. We might as well feel that we were serving truth in destroying Shakespeare's Hamlet in order to recreate a more primitive museum-exhibit Hamlet in his place. If I were in Denmark, I should be more deeply interested in seeing where the imaginary Hamlet lived than in discovering places associated with the Hamlet of an earlier and not very beautiful story. The pleasures of fiction exist for us outside books as well as in

them, and the haunts of Falstaff and Mr. Pickwick and their sites stir our curiosity more effectively than the haunts of historical figures. I would rather discover a castle associated with Jack the Giant-killer than a chair once sat in by Ethelred the Unready. I suppose I believe in the actual existence of Ethelred the Unready as I do not believe in that of Jack, but Jack is the more real to me.

For similar reasons, the story of Eden is more real to us before it has been tampered with by the hands of the botanist. General Gordon was no rationalist, but he was certainly a disturber of the faith when he set Eve opposite a double coconut. This may be the true form of the story, but it is the truth of the study, not truth shining in the light of Paradise. A coconut-eating Eve is merely a barbarian female. Only nineteenth-century science coming to the aid of nineteenth-century theology could have conceived her. Y. Y.

Correspondence

THE HOUSING PROGRAMME

SIR,—May I be allowed to supplement my recent article in your columns by indicating how under present economic conditions the slum problem could be dealt with?

I take it our aim is agreed: that no family should be housed in anything less than the Minimum Standard House, that is, the three-bedroomed non-parlour house, with an area of 760 sq. ft., built on the usual municipal lines, which is now costing, including land, streets, etc., an average of £360.

The essential facts to bear in mind are as follows:

1. Private enterprise can, according to Sir Hilton Young, under his new scheme, build such a house to let at 10*s.* net rent, local authorities at 8*s.* The average rates on such a house in urban areas amount to not less than 4*s.*, so that the lowest inclusive rents at which the houses can be let without subsidy are:

Private enterprise	14*s.*
Local authorities	12*s.*

2. I estimate that there are probably one million families living either in slums, or in any case, in houses well below the desired level, who are not able to afford the 12*s.* rent which is the lowest at which these houses can be let without subsidy. The rents these families are paying in their present houses vary probably from 5*s.* to 10*s.* inclusive, and in most cases they cannot and should not pay more than they are doing now. Any extra paid in rent would mean that their children would have to go without the necessaries of a healthy life.

These families are poor, mainly because they have a larger number of children than the average; at a guess they would include three million children. There are no decent houses at the rents which these families are now paying into which they could move; however much the filtering-up process may work, such houses do not exist. These three million children must accordingly stay in their present conditions unless and until new houses are built to be let at about the rents their families are now paying.

3. The local authorities with the present Wheatley subsidy of about 4*s.* a week can build the standard minimum house to let at 8*s.* a week.

Two conclusions follow from these facts:

(*a*) Private enterprise cannot possibly build a house at a rent which the lower-paid worker can pay. In fact, private enterprise can only cater for the aristocracy of the working classes.

(*b*) The local authorities can now cater without subsidy for the artisan class; *with the Wheatley subsidy they can provide houses at the rents which the lower-paid workers are now paying in the slums.*

If then, we are determined to get the families of the lower-paid worker out of the slums, what we have to do is perfectly clear. We have to build something like one million houses to let at an average rent of 8*s.* inclusive, and to see that these are occupied by the million families who cannot afford a higher rent and not by anybody else. The actual programme would be as follows: the local authorities to build during the next ten years 100,000 houses per annum to be let at an inclusive economic rent not exceeding 12*s.*, the Wheatley subsidy to be continued during that period, bringing the average inclusive rent down to 8*s.*, on condition that each house is occupied by a family which could not afford the economic rent.

It should be made clear to private enterprise that municipalities would confine their efforts to building solely for those who could not afford the rents which private enterprise is prepared to offer, so that the field of housing from 14*s.* upwards would be left completely free for private enterprise to go ahead without fear of municipal competition.

There are, of course, transport and other difficulties in connection with this scheme, but, broadly speaking, there is no doubt it could be effectively carried out, and that the great mass of the children who are now living in slum conditions could in this way be got into good houses within ten years at a total cost to the rates and taxes of about ten million pounds per annum.

It is quite certain that there is no other way of getting these children out of the slums. We must either face this expenditure or make up our minds to leave the children where they are.

Cheadle Heath, Stockport. E. D. SIMON

SIR,—In view of the overwhelming task of the L.C.C. in trying to provide immediate new homes for the over crowded, and of the high training and skill of the staff dealing with this problem, I have hesitated to present to you the following criticism of their methods.

It is this. The standard of rehousing is, it seems to me, far too high. The L.C.C. will not move a family of, say, eight persons into a flat or house of less than four rooms, and this at a rent of usually from 20*s.* to 23*s.*; a sufficiently high one for a working man. Thus, even if a man has steady employment, and is not in debt, even if his one room be neat and cleanly, even if he can easily pay from 15*s.* to 17*s.* for three rooms, he may not have them. He must keep on sleeping, it may be with one or more of his children in bed with himself and his wife, while the others huddle about the main bed, on chair beds or truckle beds made up at night. But, the L.C.C. informs him, it is against their principles to allow him two more rooms—one for his growing girls, the other for his sons.

Is this denial of simple decency wise? Does it tend to keep infection from spreading? Or the children off the streets, and away from the Juvenile Courts? Is it surprising that parents thus denied never, by any chance, see the faintest glint of reason in their treatment, become bitter and feel they are not free men and women? They have worked for themselves and their children, they can afford a decent home, they are told it is available, and they are not allowed to have it. D. H. ALLEN

Brown, Shipley and Co.,
123 Pall Mall.

SIR,—In spite of the energetic and wisely directed efforts of the Housing Committee of our Bristol City Council in attacking the post-war housing problem, the urgent need for still more houses here confirms all that is said in the recent article in your paper.

In 1931 a Report on the Housing Needs of Bristol under the Greenwood Act was compiled from a survey made by Mr. H. R. Burrows, M.C., B.Com., and issued by the local branch of the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association. (Copies may be obtained at 1*s.* each from the writer of this letter.) Taking as a sample 447 houses in areas typical of others, he concluded that some 10,000 were needed to replace houses beyond repair or to relieve overcrowding in the poorer districts of the city.

Since that Report was issued some 4,000 houses have been built by the local authority, a figure which reflects great credit on the Housing Committee, but if we assume (and it is a generous estimate) that one-half of these have gone to relieve overcrowding, it will be seen that a large problem still remains.

Now, according to the Government's new Housing Bill, private enterprise will be left to provide all but the houses needed for clearing the slums. But if the figures mentioned by Sir Hilton Young on the occasion of the second reading of the Bill are not immensely expanded, no appreciable effect will be made on our slum problem or on that of overcrowding, for the sum mentioned by him would provide only 12,000 houses annually for the whole country, of which Bristol's share would be some one hundred and forty!

To quote the pamphlet referred to above, it is seldom realised that "it has never paid private enterprise adequately to house

the poorer paid workers. Builder after builder failed in the early years of this century and sold his houses at a heavy loss to newcomers who were than able to let the houses at low rents. Even then the rents were above the means of the very poorest, who made up the rent by sub-letting and so created overcrowding."

By all means let private enterprise provide houses for all who can afford them. It seems clear, however, that if only our City Council could be allowed to continue and increase its excellent work of building small houses at low rents to accommodate families able and willing to move to the suburbs, and by making demolition orders on the unfit houses to enable the families so dispossessed to move into the houses vacated by the new suburbans, a grading-up system would operate and the slums could be cleared.

7 Sion Hill, Clifton, Bristol. MILLICENT M. FALK

SIR,—In common with many of your readers, I have been particularly interested in your recent articles containing constructive proposals designed to reduce unemployment by means of a new housing policy.

As these articles are being contributed by acknowledged experts, it may appear to be presumption on my part to seek for some further elucidation of the statement made by Mr. J. M. Keynes in the issue of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION of February 4th, that "according to expert calculations, houses can be built to-day, provided the finance is available at present gilt-edged rates for the period during which the cost is being amortised, to let at 8s. to 9s. per week (including repairs and amortisation, but excluding rates)."

I feel confident, however, that many of your readers would feel extremely indebted to Mr. J. M. Keynes if he could provide a detailed example indicating:

(*a*) The number of rooms per house, which is particularly important as the size of family catered for is somewhat larger than the average for the country as a whole.

(*b*) The actual estimated cost of construction, including labour and material.

(*c*) The estimated cost of land acquired, with an indication as to the number of houses per acre.

(*d*) The road charges for each house.

Moreover, can it be assumed that the weekly rental has been based upon the assumption that the estate is within reasonable distance of places of employment, so that personal daily transport charges to work would not become an important element of weekly expenditure? ARTHUR LALOR

"Pangbourne," Forty Lane,
Wembley Park.

THE FUTURE OF IRELAND

SIR,—The Conservative press, as was only to be expected, exhibited a strong bias against Mr. De Valera during the recent elections, so that it is only natural that that sturdy mouthpiece of Radicalism, THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, should attempt to present a fairer view of his case. But the writer of your last week's leading article has, as it seems to me, overlooked some of the most important effects on the future of Ireland that may be expected from Mr. De Valera's second victory. I shall only mention two.

During the last few years a breakdown in the world's economic machinery, arising primarily out of maldistribution of wealth and the blocking of the channels normally used for its exchange, has coincided with a rise in nationalism in almost every country in the world. Without postulating any causal relation between the two I should, I hope, be safe in saying that the former is not likely to ameliorate until the latter begins to subside. The writer of the article observes that "Ireland stands a much better chance of comparative self-sufficiency than Germany, where Hitler is preaching it, or England." I may be unduly optimistic, but I am convinced that in the not very distant future not only Germany and England but also the U.S.A., France, and all the great Powers will find nationalism unworkable and will be forced to adopt some measure of effective international co-operation. The real danger of Irish nationalism lies in the likelihood of its success. If Ireland embarks now on a campaign of intensive nationalism she may well find that the tide of world history will pass by her and leave her stranded. For the last six hundred years Ireland has, through no fault of her own, been kept a century or more behind the times; but this seems an inadequate reason for continuing the process now that she is free to choose her own destiny.

My second aspect is the religious, intellectual and artistic future of Ireland. I do not suffer from the virulent anti-Roman prejudice which characterises so many Irish Protestants, but I view with the greatest apprehension the prospect of an Ireland whose culture is entirely Gaelic and in which the Roman Catholic Church is omnipotent. The writer of your article says of the Fianna Fail ideal that it will be "a country blessedly cut off from what the industrialised West has learned to call progress—a country which is free from the booms and slumps of the capitalist world; a small self-contained [Roman] Catholic refuge." But it will also be a country whose citizens will spend most of their time learning and deciphering a moribund language; in which Irish games, dances, music, literature, art and every other commodity, whether material or spiritual, will be fostered and subsidised, while the corresponding commodity will be discouraged or taxed; in which the time devoted to Irish history in universities and schools will be still more disproportionate than it is now; in which educational, and particularly scientific, establishments of the kind that require generous endowment will be unknown, and whose citizens will, of course, no longer be able to rely on England to provide them with employment; which will recognise not Yeats, O'Flaherty or O'Casey, much less Shaw or Moore, but O'Donnell and Corkery, as the leaders of Irish literature; whose board of censors will put James Douglas to shame: a country where anti-clericalism instead of being, as it is now, slightly absurd, may become a public duty.

There are between 100,000 and 150,000 people in the Free State alone who are bound together by racial, cultural or religious ties—usually by all three—into the "Ascendancy" class. They represent a small minority, and no longer claim the unjustifiable privilege of ruling the Roman Catholic and, on the whole, Celtic majority. But for Fianna Fail's ideal to be realised this class must be completely jettisoned: it must be forced to choose between complete assimilation and emigration. This is a heavy sacrifice for any country to demand.

But they are, of course, in a hopeless minority, and unless events take a very unexpected turn they must be prepared to submit to their fate with as good a grace as they can muster, murmuring in the words of the prophet Isaiah: "For my people love to have it so." D. A. WEBB

Trinity College, Dublin.

SHAREHOLDERS

SIR,—The speech of Mr. Clegg at the annual meeting of the Westminster Bank Ltd., last Thursday, has been engaging my serious attention. The case he put forward was reasoned and reasonable, and undoubtedly merited a considered reply from the chairman. The most disturbing feature, however, was the almost complete unanimity and even bitterness with which my fellow-shareholders repudiated all responsibility for staff conditions.

This attitude raises very serious considerations of public policy. Shareholders are legally and morally the owners of the business in which they have invested their money. Their dividends (in the case of the Westminster Bank, a most handsome one) are earned by their employees, and the amount has a definite connection with the expenditure on salaries, and if the moral responsibility of shareholders is denied, then Mr. Clegg's stricture that we were suffering from hardening of the moral arteries is deserved.

There are grave public issues behind this incident, and I for one have not an easy conscience about them. I may say that I only know Mr. Clegg slightly, and am not connected with his organisation. A SHAREHOLDER IN EACH OF THE "BIG FIVE"

A SHORTER WORKING WEEK

SIR,—Is not Mr. Cadbury very wide of the mark in saying that "many proponents of this remedy for the present situation regard unemployment as fundamentally due to technological causes?" I do not think that one responsible advocate of shorter work-time regards it as other than a passing palliative. The adverse "balance between the demand for and the supply of labour" is not an adverse balance of using power but of buying power; that, surely, is the real disequilibrium about which Mr. Cadbury is very properly concerned. The forces that are working badly are all human; a human disease awaiting human cure. Mechanisation, like finance, has been allowed to become one of our masters instead of being retained as one of our servants. Short of glut, mechanisation has been of enormous human advantage. The glut age is here. The evil is here. The very silly prices are here. The immeasurable suffering is here.

And in the presence of the silliness and the suffering Mr. Cadbury says "We should strive." "We should find some way." "I believe." "Is it too much to hope?" Is that as far as Mr. Cadbury would get if, instead of every three employed maintaining one unemployed, the figures were reversed and every employed had to keep three unemployed? I put it to Mr. Cadbury that there is as much need for courage and determination as though the reversal had arrived. That the expansion of production has to be balanced at all costs by an equal expansion of consumption. That the financiers, as we know them, the super-efficients, as we know them, and the bunch of people who have kept selling prices at 143, which should have been near 86 (with other related groups), are all expensive luxuries that cannot be maintained if the aforesaid suffering is to be wiped out; that control of the essential is as much of the essence as is the removal of the redundant and the mischievous; and that any and all belief that unemployment is a necessary evil amounts to a confession that our so-called progress is a ghastly make-believe. J. HAWKES

Hemel Hempstead.

"THE BULPINGTON OF BLUP"

SIR,—I am so sorry to see that my *Bulpington of Blup* has touched Mr. Francis Birrell on a raw place and still sorrier to realise that beneath the fair friendliness of our many meetings he has been hiding so much scorn and contempt for me. Apparently he has not realised that the *Bulpington of Blup* is a novel and not a statement of opinion and that I had not the remotest intention of making Theodore a "type-aesthete" or the Broxteds "type-scientists." And anyhow Mr. Birrell's citation of his own admirable classical education is a trifle irrelevant. He has every reason to know that there were young scientific workers among the conscientious objectors. Theodore had neither a classical nor a scientific education; that issue doesn't arise; he had a sloppy ill-trained mind and his reveries ran away with him. That is the theme of the book, the way in which a human mind slides away from disagreeable realisations.

Whether I am the sort of shyster who is "inevitably found on the side of the big battalions" it is not for me to say. I haven't felt like that and I am distressed to find that that is Mr. Birrell's matured opinion of me. In 1914 I thought it was England that was up against the big battalions. I doubt if *Boon* (1914) with its reflection on Mr. Osborn and the "Wild Asses of the Devil" or *Mr. Britling* (1916) can really be cited as the work of a blood-thirsty Jingo. Nobody has ever read *Joan and Peter*, but that too is a wartime book with a reasonable attitude towards the war. Mr. Birrell sneers at my "unparalleled services to the State as a war propagandist." I suppose he refers to my time at Crewe House which ended in a breach with Northcliffe. There is a sufficient record of my work there to show that I did my utmost to help on the movement to extract a statement of War Aims from the Foreign Office and to commit this country to a not yet Wilsonised League of Nations. That I thought would bring the war to an end. What heroic measures Mr. Birrell was taking to end the war are lost in the obscurity of the past. No doubt he was displaying enormous energy and courage in some fields unknown to me.

During and after the war I have put in a good lot of hard work upon the problem of world peace. I think Mr. Birrell's manifest belief that anyone who is not an ex-conscientious objector should be warned off this field is an extravagant one. I have the friendliest feeling for him and—what is it?—his friends the other "aesthetes," but I have not nearly sufficient confidence in their power and vigour, and I am far too anxious to work on the road to world peace myself, to let them monopolise the business.

Nevertheless I am prepared to hear in all humility from Mr. Birrell just what he and the aesthetes generally are doing to make another great war impossible. H. G. WELLS

47 Chiltern Court,
Clarence Gate, N.W.1.

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

SIR,—Critics, one supposes, are never happier than at their criticising. At the risk, however, of displeasing him who writes in your pages under the anonymous style of all criticism, may I, with regard to "God Save the King," offer the information that this tune was, in Beethoven's view, one of the finest ever written. In fact, it inspired him to variations; and had American psychologists been as inquisitive about the opinions of the great in his day, as they are in ours, they would no doubt have succeeded in producing the interesting fact that the composer of the Choral Symphony included, with the tin-trumpet tune from that work, the British National Anthem among the world's six best ear-ticklers. On the other hand, it may be that a tune which simply seeks to express in music a sense of the virtues of political stability, strikes your contributor as irritatingly anomalous, at a time when all politics, besides that menacing kind whose particular confusion is desired by patriots, are more than usually liable to be confounded. THOMAS FARRAR

46 Paulton's Square, S.W.3.

AN HISTORICAL PARALLEL

SIR,—In the year 1381, King Richard II being much perturbed by the repeated representations of the Commons that the good money of England was being carried beyond the seas, so that that which remained had all become "feeble," consulted a number of experts as to what should be done to remedy this situation.

These gentlemen, evidently bankers and merchants of the City of London, were practically unanimous in thinking that the trouble was due to the realm expending too much on foreign merchandise such as grocery, mercery, furs, ivory, precious stones, etc., and in giving their opinion that "if no more of foreign commodities were allowed to be imported than the value of the native commodities which should be taken out, the money of England would remain and great plenty would come from beyond the seas." Why, if we suppressed the date and slightly modernised the language, we might fancy ourselves listening to a consultation between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the "penguins of the City" in the year of Our Lord 1933.

11 Goldington Road, A. MITCHELL INNES
Bedford.

Miscellany

POEM

AFTER my marriage night, she said, what with love and hate
So mixed and crossed in me, and my own body lost to me,
Heavy with newness of love, like grass drenched down with dew,
And myself, it seemed, with nothing to do but sit and await
The upshot of their debate,

I lost my count of time, she said, I cowered low
Under passing of time, astray in the chime of day
On day clashed and dissolving, night on night a flash
Of darkness smiting anew and lingering on slow
And booming as the echo

Of the tenor bell that rules whatsoever the change
From its root escaping, I lay as mute, she said,
Under the sound of time passing as underground
The dead lie listless and amazed, hearing the strange
Overhead music range.

The noise of harvest went by, I heard the sighing stooks
And the shouts of those who carried them as though they had married them.
Beribboned the harvest baby was nailed over the hearth,
And over the silent acres went the whirring of rooks.
Shrill from the hedgerow nooks

I heard the bicker of starlings tugging at the elder-tree
Or the cries of rambling children among the bramble bushes;
And at every thud of a ripened apple falling my blood
Was bruised and fled outward as though it were falling through me
With a menace of what might be.

And then came a morning when there was no sound at all.
And I surprised as might be the dead could rise up free
To steal out early as I did when I was a girl.
Between the two cockcrowings it was, and the sky was tall
With the first looks of the fall

Of the year, standing off naked and remote from an earth that yet
Green-muffled its breast as though loth to be undressed of summer;
But I with the tall sky was done with it all,
And my feet through the snow-cold dew waded with a well-met
To that washing and whet.

Grey was the unawakened air, the steadfast arch of the down
Stretched like the curving wings of a gull that unswerving sleeps
Onward its way, grey on a cloud of grey,
And onward went I, careless as one in a sleepwalking swownd,
And cold in my cotton gown.

I was proud as I went, I scorned the fields that had given increase
And awaited now like slaves the certain ploughing of winter
I turned to those acres I knew unfruitful and forsaken;
But behold, my bitter pasture was whitened like a fleece
With mushrooms, and lay at peace.

In a night they had come, whence and how, who could tell?—
Myriads of rounded mushrooms everywhere surrounding me,
Thrusting out tender from the harsh earth, ungendered,
Frail, with the cleaving grasses broken by their upswell
That no bondage could quell.

I was at peace with them, seeing them so undefiled,
Knowing the gills so delicate hidden under the chilly flesh;
At a birth so meek and marvellous, so secret and maiden-sleek,
I knelt on the grass then, I gave thanks and was mild,
Knowing myself with child.

SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER

HAYDN'S "SEASONS"

FORTUNATELY I discovered just in time—not being a wireless listener—that Dr. Adrian Boult was giving a performance of Haydn's oratorio, *The Seasons*, in two parts, the Sunday before last, and I received an invitation to the studio to hear it. It was one of the most enjoyable experiences I have had for a long time.

In spite of Haydn's great position in the history of music I do not think that his genius quite receives due recognition on aesthetic as distinct from scholastic or historical grounds. That part of his work which is chiefly valued nowadays is his quartets. Even his later symphonies take a second place, although their merits are recognised by most musicians. Personally I prefer them to the symphonies of Brahms, but I find only a few to agree with me in this preference. But, like Mozart, he does not depend for his place in the hierarchy of music solely upon his instrumental compositions, and his oratorios are to Haydn what his operas are to Mozart.

The two oratorios, *The Creation* and *The Seasons*, were his last compositions on a large scale; the first performance of the former being in 1798 and of the latter in 1801, and Haydn himself said: "*The Seasons* gave me the finishing stroke"—although he did not actually die until the year 1809, at the age of seventy-seven. Even the younger generation of music-lovers know *The Creation*, but it awaits its complete resurrection as a great musical masterpiece at the Queen's Hall with a first-rate picked choir and soloists. Like the *Messiah*, *The Creation* has suffered from being used for official ecclesiastical purposes, and has been not only ruthlessly and indiscriminately cut but perfunctorily and shabbily performed. Let it be given as Sir Thomas Beecham and the Philharmonic Choir performed the *Messiah* and its extraordinary qualities could not be missed by any music-lover; nor would it be possible any longer to write as Mr. Thomas F. Dunhill wrote in *The Heritage of Music*: "Even the oratorio *The Creation* and the cantata *The Seasons*, once popular choral works, are seldom performed and arouse little enthusiasm."

To my knowledge *The Seasons* has never been performed in London during the last twenty years, and I should not be surprised if it were much longer since it was heard here last. In any case we may be certain that it did not receive adequate treatment, and it is likely that the twentieth century will prove far more understanding of this music than the nineteenth. Even the religious spirit of *The Creation* was alien to our fathers and grandfathers, for it was far too jovial and simple. Probably they would have called it pagan if it had not been for its almost biblical text. That is probably why Mr. Dunhill can write of Haydn: "For the highest type of religious music he was imperfectly equipped. His settings of sacred words lack dignity and solemnity."

It is true that Haydn is never solemn, but it is also true that he is frequently sublime, and the reason why his direct and profound simplicity is so often mistaken for superficiality lies in the triviality of his interpreters. As a great living musician has pointed out, there is the first simplicity and the last simplicity, and this "last simplicity" is always the prerogative of the greatest art. In *The Creation* and in *The Seasons* we have this last simplicity, and it demands the greatest intensity and concentration on the part of singers and instrumentalists to do justice to it and to render it adequately.

In many respects *The Seasons* differs from *The Creation*; it is a more lyrical work, and, in spite of the difficulty of treating such a subject as the four seasons: spring, summer, autumn, winter, without monotony, Haydn has so skilfully varied the treatment of his three solo voices—soprano, tenor and bass—with the choruses that the variety he achieves is remarkable. *The Seasons* can only be compared with one of those great series of frescoes by Fra Angelico or Giotto, except that it deals with the country life of the husbandman and not with the religious or contemplative life. We may call it descriptive music in a sense, but it is descriptive as the frescoes of the great Italian painters are descriptive, not by the mere imitation of life but by the expression of art. We might also make a comparison of *The Seasons* with Virgil's *Georgics*, and, indeed, it is more than likely that James Thomson—the author of *The Seasons* from which Baron van Swieten made the text for Haydn—had Virgil's work in mind when he wrote his poem.

It is said that Haydn was very discontented with the text prepared for him by Van Swieten, thinking it "commonplace and prosaic." This certainly would not be a fair description of Thomson's poem, which has always been deservedly admired and has many splendid passages that no anthologist of eighteenth-century poetry could miss. Nor do I think it applies to Haydn's text as we know it. But the "poetry" certainly has largely evaporated from the text, and this is not surprising, for the alteration of one word is enough to spoil a line, and many of Thomson's best passages are not to be found in the cantata. But this is no loss. I would even go so far as to say it was an advantage. What a text for musical setting should supply is the mere framework, the skeleton material, and it is for the composer to breathe life into this and give it the flesh and blood reality of a true creation. This Haydn does with unfailing certainty. As an illustration of the function of words and music respectively I will quote a passage from Thomson which does not appear in Haydn's text but which appears in his music. It is the following:

What art thou, frost? and whence are thy keen stores
Derived, thou secret all-invading power,
Whom even the illusive fluid cannot fly?
. . . . At eve,
An icy gale, oft shifting, o'er the pool
Beathes a blue film, and in its mid career
Arrests the bickering stream. The loosened ice
Let down the flood, and half dissolved by day
Rustles no more; but to the sedgy bank
Fast grows, or gathers round the pointed stone,
A crystal pavement, by the breath of heaven
Cemented firm; till seized from shore to shore
The whole imprisoned river growls below.
Loud rings the frozen earth and, hard, reflects
A double noise; . . .
And with the hasty tread
Of traveller, the hollow-sounding plain
Shakes from afar.

I have to spoil this quotation somewhat by cutting to keep in the possible limits of this article, but it is perhaps sufficient. Now, if we turn to Haydn's cantata and turn up No. 32 in "Winter" we will find an aria "Here stands the wanderer now uncertain and perplexed . . . depressed his spirits drop . . . as day to night begins to yield, and weariness and frost have stiffened all his limbs, etc.," which gives in music the counterpart of Thomson's poetry with marvellous effect. I think it would be impossible to exaggerate the beauty of Haydn's vocal line and instrumentation here. But I feel that if he had set the verses I have quoted with the idea of doing with his music what Thomson had already done with his words there would have been an inartistic conflict or clash of mediums. It is not for the musician to do what the poet has already done, and Haydn throughout *The Seasons* shows the infallible tact of a great composer at the height of his powers, and that is why Thomson's poetry is not in the text but in the music of the cantata.

To me *The Seasons* is one of the purest and ripest products of musical art. Its greatness has been obscured throughout a romantic and extravagant century because it has the temperateness and benignant calm of a great and tranquil spirit. Let us hope that next year Dr. Adrian Boult will resurrect it at the Queen's Hall as Sir Thomas Beecham resurrected the *Messiah*.

W. J. TURNER

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Richard of Bordeaux"

Shakespeare's psychology, if not his art, is challenged at the New Theatre, where, it may be hoped, Miss Daviot's *Richard of Bordeaux* is demonstrating that there is still a West End public for a good historical play. Shakespeare's Richard is a mystic and an introvert, Miss Daviot's is rationalist and extrovert. Rationalist, it must be added, not only in his rejection of the blood-and-ironmongery environment in which he incredibly blossoms, but in his frank acceptance of all the fantastic delights which his fourteenth-century world of the senses has to offer. One could wish that his development from frustrated youth to subtle autocrat and on to over-reaching egotist had been more explicitly sketched. How came it that the young man who was nagged into hysteria and the sacrifice of his friends in 1386 was able to cast his persecutors off with a gesture in 1391 and avenge his wrongs so thoroughly? Why was Richard so completely at sea about the state of popular feeling on his last return from Ireland? On these points history may hint, but Miss Daviot is silent, though in her portrait of Bolingbroke (how brilliantly Mr. Henry Mollison suggests the thick-headed power of the man!) she cleverly indicates that he is only effective with the Archbishop of Canterbury at his elbow. Nevertheless she has provided Mr. John Gielgud with a part in which all his known abilities and a number of unsuspected ones are given full opportunity; it is a fine performance. Miss Gwen ffrangçon-Davies is as enchanting as intelligent in the part of Anne of Bohemia, and a large company of capable players make up a team which has not been equalled in the West End these five years.

Patchy

In *Doctor's Orders*, at the Globe, Raymond Massey has a part after his own heart, and Yvonne Arnaud makes a part that is anyone's—or no one's—into her very own. That is her genius: to watch her manufacturing an Arnaud part is an evening's entertainment in itself. Her best points are all her own, and it never occurs to you that she may once have learned how to act. Raymond Massey, looking incredibly like Aldous Huxley, makes a philanthropic criminal into a consistently lovable person of whom you could believe anything. But, in spite of them, this mixture of comedy and gentlemanly crime only bubbles in patches.

"The Witch"

Mr. Masefield's talent is ill attuned to Norway. There is little either in the language or the manner of his adaptation of this Norwegian play, revived by Miss Nancy Price, to capture the imagination. These witches, these staring grandmothers, these spells, are all stage properties; never for a moment does one breathe the atmosphere of true superstition. Nor, on the other hand, does Mr. Masefield succeed in showing us the conflict between the psychological and the supernatural which the character of the young witch must surely have been designed to represent. It is true that he has had no help from the company at the Little Theatre, who are playing *The Witch* as melodrama of the crudest kind. To hear Mr. Alan Napier murmur "My boy" is to be transported from Norway nearer home. The women in the cast are less at fault. Miss Haidée Wright, within the melodramatic tradition, gives a magnificent performance as the elder witch, and Miss Leonora Corbett does suggest, at times, the wondering horror at her own powers that Anne Pedersdotter must have felt. But the production as a whole is unconvincing. One leaves it feeling that a play of this kind should be kept for the repertory of Grand Guignol.

Three Galleries

Mr. McKnight Kauffer's Underground posters are a distinct feature of London life. They were the first, and very successful, application of modern methods in painting to popular use in this country, but the quality of their appeal made them of necessity impersonal and emphatic. At Messrs. Tooth's, Mr. Kauffer's water-colours of Southern France have a more concealed mechanism. They are sensitive and alive with emotion. Avoiding the hackneyed picturesque of the beauty-spot, besides resisting the temptation to re-tread the path of Derain, Mr. Kauffer's impressions of mood through landscape are also a refreshingly new and real perception of the characteristic Provence. He triumphantly, for instance, passes the extremely difficult test of the olive-tree. His neighbour, Mr. Fitton, is more than promising. There are echoes in his work, but in the rural landscapes and Cornish ports he moulds them with an individual impress. His colour is filled with light and beautifully laid on the canvas, and he gives an interpretation as well as a pictorial arrangement. Mr. Anton Lock's exhibition, *Horses*, at the Leger Gallery, is remarkable for the rare craftsmanship of his etchings and woodcuts, and, above all, for admirable draughtsmanship. Beneath the convincing realism there lies a mastery of design, in outline and contained mass, which continues the tradition of fine drawing, often neglected to-day, yet basic and universal in world art of any consequence. At Messrs. Colnaghi's, Daumier, Forain, and other classics of lithography support the work in that medium of Mr. John Copley and Miss Ethel Gabain, which hangs naturally and on equality beside them. Miss Gabain shows also some calm, radiant paintings. All these three galleries display particular and interesting sections of contemporary accomplishment.

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, February 11th—
Rugby Football. England *v.* Ireland. Twickenham.
Léner Quartet, Queen's Hall, 3.

SUNDAY, February 12th—
D. Christie Tait on "Some International Aspects of Unemployment," Conway Hall, 11.
J. F. Horrabin on "The Break-up of Imperialism," Transport Hall, Smith Square, S.W., 7.30.

MONDAY, February 13th—
Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Furtwängler, Albert Hall, 8.15 (and on February 14th).
"Mlle. Julie," Arts Theatre.

TUESDAY, February 14th—
J. Graham Jeffreys on "International Interest and the Public Schools," Friends House, Euston Road, 1.20.
John Grierson on "The Technique of Sound," Morley College, Westminster Bridge Road, 8.
Maurice Dobb on "Planned Economy in Soviet Russia," Board Room, Central Y.W.C.A., Gt. Russell Street, 8.15.
Dr. L. P. Jacks on "The Social Sciences and Philosophy," University College, Gower Street, 8.15.
"Between Friends," Shaftesbury Theatre.

WEDNESDAY, February 15th—
Com. O. Locker Lampson on "My Further Experiences in Russia," 40, Berkeley Square, 5.30.
B.B.C. Symphony Concert, Queen's Hall, 8.15.
"The Holmeses of Baker Street," Lyric Theatre.

THURSDAY, February 16th—
"La Ronde," Arts Theatre.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17th—
Demonstration Against Educational Cuts. Friends House, Euston Road, 7.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

WITH our commensals, in our daily lives, we make continual and never-ending emotional adjustments; we are wounded to the quick and in ten minutes have forgiven and forgotten the offence. We give pain and drive those we love frantic with irritation and receive complete absolution between the cocktails and the cheese. For we have to live with each other. But with the authors we read we are on very different terms. They are emotional mercenaries, picked up at one moment, to be thrown down at another; and though these harlots of the spirit may give us the keenest raptures in the world, we have no responsibility to them. If they offend us we cast them into outer darkness and do not readily give them a second trial. For eight days of solitude forced on me by an Atlantic crossing I wrestled at intervals with what seemed to me the hateful fraudulence of *Sanctuary*, by William Faulkner, a book in which the impotent gun-man, Pop-eye, stands out with the varnished solidity of a wooden doll. Everything else in the book swirls away in a sticky flood of blood-stained verbiage, and the instrument of the lunatic crime, which forms the central incident of the book, would have been obscure to me had I not come straight from the lovely Southern fields where, from the axils of the broad-leaved stalks, thousands of jutting corncobs foamed in purple effusions with a phallic symbolism. *Sanctuary* seemed to me false and I found its adolescent swagger tiresomely disgusting. Though the writing had flashes of great power, the only words to describe it were Humpty-Dumpty's "Impenetrability—that's what I say." Like Humpty-Dumpty "I meant by impenetrability that we've had enough of that subject"; but it is also true that the book is almost like armour-plate. Faulkner undoubtedly exhibited there in a high degree the pre-requisite of greatness demanded by Mrs. Leavis. *Sanctuary* needs intellectual effort to be read.

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And in *The Sound and the Fury*, the first third of which is told by an idiot who cannot distinguish between the present and the past, we are given a deliberately jumbled time-scheme and the impenetrability is greater still. Reading it, I felt that such an experiment would have been more fun in a musical composition. But the latter part of the book, seen through the eyes of the most disagreeable possible type of American, is easy, powerful and entertaining. *Light In August* (Chatto and Windus, 8s. 6d.) is an entirely different matter. Anyone who has been discouraged by attempting Faulkner's earlier books should start afresh, and put up cheerfully with the gibes of his steadfast admirers who have cut their way through the earlier works with the oxy-acetylene heat of their admiration. The story is hung round the murder of a New England woman, living alone in a decaying house in the South, by a tramp bootlegger who has settled on her property and become her lover. This lonely nymphomaniac, and this sadistic, buttoned-up bootlegger, haunt Faulkner and he has used them before. The ramifications of the plot are immense, and the details are revealed in a way reminiscent of the early Conrad, and still more of Stephen Crane. Again and again one is reminded of the flavour of *Almayer's Folly* and of *The Monster*, and of the other stories in that wonderful volume. The resemblance is not due to influence or to imitation, but comes from the fact that Faulkner's thoughts grow up out of his own descriptions as Crane's and Conrad's do. Here is an instance of it.

"He approached the bed. The still invisible occupant snored profoundly. There was a quality of profound and complete surrender in it. Not of exhaustion, but surrender, as though he had given over and relinquished completely that grip upon that blending of pride and hope and vanity and fear which is the I-Am, and relinquishment of which is usually death." The resemblance extends to little phrases, such as: "with stern and *austere astonishment*. . . ." But I am not suggesting that Faulkner, who is completely original, has even read Conrad. The similarity is in the way his thoughts arise from what he has already described. Like Conrad and like Crane, in his best passages you see him working himself up from one brilliant exaggeration to another until he achieves phrases of absolute genius. It is a method of approach in which the writer is always feeling a need to break his own record, to go one better than himself. This possesses Faulkner to such an extent that in places he can only be compared with an enraged scorpion stinging itself to death.

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"Presently the fire truck came up gallantly, with noise, with whistles and bells. It was new, painted red, with gilt trim and a hand-power siren and a bell gold in colour and in tone serene, arrogant and proud. About it hatless men and youths clung with the astonishing disregard of physical laws that flies possess. It had mechanical ladders that sprang to prodigious heights at a touch of the hand, like opera hats; only there was now nothing for them to spring to. It had neat and virgin coils of hose evocative of telephone trust advertisements in the popular magazines; but there was nothing to hook them to and nothing to flow through them. So the hatless men, who had deserted counters and desks, swung down, even including the one who ground the siren. They came too, and were shown several different places where the body had lain, and some of them with pistols already in their pockets began to canvass about for someone to crucify." That is pure Crane, but on the next page Faulkner topples over into an Amanda Ros-ish impenetrability in a way that Crane could never have done. "It seemed to him that that by and because of which he had had ancestors long enough to come himself to be, had allied itself with crime. So he continued to walk in a baffled and fretted manner about that heedless monument of the colour of both hope and catastrophe until a deputy came up and told how he had discovered in a cabin beyond the house traces of recent occupation." And of course neither Crane nor Conrad could have begun a chapter with a passage like this: "Memory believes before knowing remembers. Believes longer than recollects, longer than knowing even wonders. Knows, remembers, believes a corridor in a big long garbled cold echoing building of dark red brick soot-bleakened by more chimneys than its own, set in a grassless, cinderstrewnpacked compound surrounded by smoking factory purlieus and enclosed by a ten foot steelandwire fence like a penitentiary or a zoo, where in random erratic surges, with sparrowlike child trebling, orphans in identical and uniform blue denim in and out of remembering but in knowing as constant as the bleak walls, the bleak windows where in rain soot from the yearly adjacenting chimneys streaked like black tears." That is what I should call a solid modern facing of Stein slapped on at the corner to buttress up the old Southern colonial house with its memories of cruelty and of slavery, which Faulkner has inherited. It jumbles the architectural style but it gives the owner confidence to go on living there.

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Faulkner has the modern freedom which enables him to describe in detail all sorts of things which the older generation had been brought up to regard as unmentionable. But in spite of his dwelling on scenes of sadistic cruelty, and on the monthly courses of women, it is significant that his hero, the good man, remains true to the Dickens type. At moments he seems positively to be a sort of David Copperfield straying among the crowd of "poor white" hysterical degenerates. Faulkner is a writer of original growth, but in the best parts of his work he is producing the same sort of effects that Crane achieved in the 'nineties. Unfortunately by temperament he is reckless and uncritical, so that *Light In August* suffers from a boring profuseness where he finds it necessary to tell the same story twice over and show it to us through the clumsily moving minds of the characters. But in spite of its faults it is a great book, full of extremely fine bits of writing; it is finely conceived though it is badly planned, and it is a triumphant vindication of his earliest admirers. MERCURY PATTEN

DANTE IN ENGLISH

The Divine Comedy. The Italian Text with a translation in terza-rima Verse. By MELVILLE B. ANDERSON. *World's Classics. Oxford University Press.* 3 *Vols.* 2*s.* each.

The Paradiso of Dante. With a Translation into English triple rhyme and a brief Introduction. By GEOFFREY L. BICKERSTETH. *Cambridge University Press.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

There is no end to the translating of the *Divine Comedy*. The process does not seem to make Dante any better known to English readers. Contrary to what is usually pretended, few people in this country have much acquaintance even with the *Inferno*, and the little they have has been acquired, as a rule, through Cary's version. It is a sad state of things: no wonder enthusiasts cannot give up trying to get their poet read. For this nothing more should be needed than a translation, in the first place, easily accessible, and, secondly, easy to read—but hitherto none, it would seem, has been produced which satisfies both these conditions. Cary is, of course, accessible enough; he is dignified, he is even sympathetic; but only the sternest spirits can sit down and read him through.

Mr. Anderson's translation may be more persuasive. Its inclusion in the World's Classics brings it within reach of everyone; and its form gives it an enormous advantage, to begin with, over Cary's extraordinarily undantesque blank verse. To get anything of Dante's flavour, Dante's metre must be used: accuracy of translation is not nearly so important. With the metre, Mr. Anderson has kept much of the directness, vigour and simplicity of the poet's language, which Cary, of course, wilfully Miltonised; and his rhythms have even something of the Italian flow. At his best, in short, he is as good as possible, but he is at his best only in flashes; most of his terzets are flawed—most, indeed, are rather badly flawed. He is at the mercy of the rhyme, he has no respect, it appears, for shades of meaning, he has almost no judgment, or perception of the ludicrous. At one moment he completely parts company with his original, at another he translates so nearly word for word as to be densely obscure or even meaningless. *Gente*, in one place, he renders "gentry," *sonò come tamburo* becomes "rumbled like a tambourine," and *Romeo persona umile e peregrina* is made into "Romeo, a lowly pilgrimer." These are representative examples—there is something of the kind in every canto, but from the beginner's point of view it does not matter, perhaps, as much as one might think. Through Mr. Anderson the beginner will see, at least, a gleam of Dante.

Mr. Bickersteth, however, makes him look an irresponsible amateur. Mr. Bickersteth, in his preface, analyses the technique of Dante translation with an inflexible minuteness which may well scare intending translators in the future, and he does not fall below his own standards. It may seem a pity therefore that to most readers the *Paradiso* is the least attractive of the Canticbe; but Mr. Bickersteth, exceptionally and rather oddly, translates for those already familiar with and especially attached to it. His version, he says, is "primarily intended for the reader with whom the third and greatest cantica of the Divine Comedy counts (outside the Bible) as the supreme expression in literature of the Christian faith, and who uses it as such for study and meditation." Secondly, it is "specially addressed to those whom the *Paradiso* fascinates and delights as the supreme achievement of the poet's art." Yet, though meaning his work primarily for the student, Mr. Bickersteth with strange perversity includes no notes, because they "would distract attention and can easily be obtained elsewhere." On the other hand, he includes the Italian text "for easy reference," and "that none may suppose the English version is intended to stand instead of it." But who, after all, reads a verse translation of a great poem, except those for whom it *must* "stand instead" of the original? To those who know a little Italian, a prose translation is of far more use; and as for distraction, can *anything* be more distracting than bilingual texts?

Mr. Bickersteth, in fact, has crammed his "brief introduction" with provocative remarks. Like all the elect who consider the *Paradiso* the "best part" of the poem, he is inclined to be rather rude upon the subject. We *cannot*, he insists, find its abstruse discussions at all dry, because every point raised is as much a "living problem" as it was in Dante's day. Nothing—he reminds us, on the authority of Santayana—is as human and emotional as theory, and we think otherwise merely in obedience to what "a kind of sensualism or aestheticism" has recently "decreed." Moreover, it is really "romantic" (dread reproach) to like human interest in our poetry. Much, of course, might be said in reply. Granting that all Dante's problems, "theological, metaphysical, moral or scientific," are still vital—that it is still a vital problem, for example, whether Adam was as wise as Solomon—it does not follow that Dante's answers to them are still interesting; in fact, students of science, etc., do not, as such, read the *Divine Comedy* at all. And then, it seems useless to tell those who are bored by the discussions in the *Paradiso* that as these discussions are the most interesting thing in life they can't be bored. As for the reference to what "sensualism or aestheticism" has "decreed in our day," it is by no means of late that the *Paradiso* was first set down as comparatively dull: the other side might point out as more genuinely modern the kind of snobbery that bids us quail at the epithet "romantic."

Mr. Bickersteth's preface may be controversial, but the translation itself never has been, and probably never will be, better done. It has very few off moments; it makes the most abstruse passages plane-sailing; it is, in fact, a triumph of conscientious workmanship. Mr. Bickersteth has pitted himself unyieldingly against his difficult medium, and almost completely got the better of it. His version lacks the musical quality of the original, and has not, of course, quite the peculiar *Dante* flavour—nor even, perhaps, quite as much of it as can be kept; but scholarship and patient talent can do no more.

K. JOHN

NEW NOVELS

A Winter Journey. By ALEC BROWN. *Cape.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Strange River. By JULIAN GREEN. *Heinemann.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Phoenix and the Dove. By CUNLIFFE OWEN. *Rich and Cowan.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Coming Back. By CONSTANCE MALLESON. *Cape.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Nurse. By BARBARA HUGHES-STANTON. *Secker.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

I'll Tell You Everything. By J. B. PRIESTLEY and GERALD BULLETT. *Heinemann.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

A Young Gentleman in Poland. By ALEXANDER LERNET-HOLENIA. *Duckworth.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

East Anglia, so long beloved of English painters, now seems very frequently to catch the novelist's eye as well, and in *A Winter Journey* Mr. Alec Brown has brought talent and devotion to a portrayal of its aspects. His story of the events of a few autumn and winter months on a farm near Diss has no cold comfort about it, but deals in straightforward gravity with the activities, tribulations and sentiments of the simple. Its author's great strength, among many weaknesses, is in his awareness of the complexity of simple feelings and motives, and this, supported by his ability to describe the natural scene with truth and freshness, makes his work as genuinely impressive sometimes as sometimes it is exasperating. The exasperation comes from Mr. Brown's sentimentality and repetitiveness. Too much knowledge of how the normal man feels and thinks will always create danger of the first for the unwary writer, just as too easy a descriptive power will make the second. Mr. Brown falls heavily again and again into both traps, and indeed generally into both at once, for it is most often in his overemphasis, his dinning in of points already clearly understood that he turns pathos into bathos. But for all its mistakes no critical reader of *A Winter Journey* can pursue this story of the love of a self-willed, hot-tempered, sensitive old farmer for his adopted daughter without being made aware of a grave and just and idiosyncratic mind behind it. The description, for instance, in the early pages, of the face and body of Cully Thordick, before his terrible accident, or the evocation of snow-silence over farmlands, is evidence, in the midst of too much wordiness, that here, not yet in command of his own power, is a novelist of some stature.

Turning from rural things, of which, one knows, a great number of people cannot read with any patience, we come to Mr. Julian Green and a tricky network of highly urban complexities, and to a novelist in complete, perhaps too complete, command of himself. If the great merit of *A Winter Journey* is that it reminds us how intricately simplicity can feel, perhaps the defect of *The Strange River* is that it says again, what Mr. Julian Green has become expert at saying, that in the sophisticated and well-fed bourgeois, feeling and self-analysis, assuming the proportions of a full-time exercise, simplify themselves by the elimination of all those normal, extrovert activities which make the complications of the simple. Vitality, that monstrous troubler, does not greatly trouble the characters of Mr. Julian Green, so that they are left with ample

time and attention to give to their own broodings and mutterings and self-loathings beside the dark Seine. Philip Cléry, his wife Henriette, his sister-in-law Eliane, his little son, so nearly happy could they but have kept their torturing self-pity from singeing him—all these, with their especial and so skilfully differentiated obsessions, are presented with a formidable skill which yet is not enough to make the novel memorable. Philip is a coward, and is only safe from disgrace or death because his cowardice rises highest before the idea of ridicule; Henriette, light and cruel, takes a morbid pleasure, in her wealth, out of poverty and wretchedness; Eliane is miserably in love with Philip, miserably contemptuous of herself, miserably, intermittently tender towards her sister; all three behave characteristically and hysterically towards the little boy who moves uneasily among them—and the whole situation, which might have climbed to a terrible greatness, is merely depressive in the end.

The Phoenix and the Dove, undoubtedly an ambitious affair, since its protagonists are Shakespeare, Queen Elizabeth and the Earl of Southampton, is one of those careful, well-made books about which it is difficult to convey without a lurking feeling of injustice the "middling" feeling which it gives one. It is interesting; so far as one may judge, it is founded on good history; its décor is convincing and heavily laid on; it gives a credible picture of Tudor England; its minor characters, Florio, Essex, Elizabeth Vernon, are livelily sketched in; the Queen herself, in all the horribleness and greatness of her old age, is made very probable; and the rise, dénouement and decline of Shakespeare's friendship with Southampton, is carefully depicted, with much quoting of the sonnets. But somehow, whether it is that one's sentimentality is at fault and foolishly resents a novel about Shakespeare, or whether the author's own spirit quailed too often before his undertaking, one cannot find anywhere in the book the final necessary spark of creative audacity.

Creative audacity, however, is the very quality that sparks and squibs all over Lady Constance Malleson's novel, *The Coming Back*. The pity is that, by itself and even in abundance, it is not enough. For this good-humoured, lively, quick-moving narration of the adventures in love and work of a highly vitalised heroine called Konradin Waring, though readable and spirited, is entirely amateurish. It reads like the work of someone who, with plenty to say, had the sudden notion to have a shot at writing a novel, and just went, without more ado, and had a shot. Not a bad shot either, when one considers how dangerous enthusiasm must be for a marksman. The style of the book, too exclamatory, is nevertheless vigorous and even sometimes genuinely effective. But for the most part it is journalese—well-mannered, gracious, easy journalese—and the matter is like the matter of a thousand books.

But too much enthusiasm will almost certainly produce a better first novel than too much pedestrian care, and Miss Barbara Hughes-Stanton's dull little story, *Nurse*, would have benefited by a few of Lady Constance Malleson's dots and dashes. As it is, however, the going is slow through this tale of two young sisters in Putney and the trouble that comes to one of them through too much innocence. Slow and pathetic and irritating—the only enlivening passage being the family holiday at Boulogne and the mischief Daddy gets up to there and thereafter. And for the tragedy of innocence, well, Nurse was hovering in the background—if I may so misname the suburb of Golders Green—and one knew that she would see innocence through. And she did—through into the sturdy arms of a Scotch doctor, the fruits of the innocent sin safely dead and she herself dying when her job was done. All adequate and pedestrian—except for the pleasing bits about Daddy.

I'll Tell You Everything is called a frolic, and its two distinguished authors, Mr. J. B. Priestley and Mr. Gerald Bullett, have taken pains to keep it well within the meaning of that word. That some of us are not frolicsome by nature is neither here nor there, since most people quite genuinely are, and even if you have the kind of 'flu on which this lively muddle about a Cambridge don and a lovely young woman and a steel casket would act as an irritant rather than a sedative, you will hardly fail to smile at the astrachan coats adventure, or at Mr. Porson, "P for Percy," or at Fred, or at the sketch of the two authors which rounds the whole business off.

A Young Gentleman in Poland, by Alexander Lernet-Holenia, and very well translated by Mr. Alan Harris, is a frolic too, though less determinedly frolicsome. It is all about a young German lieutenant of Hussars who, escaping into Poland during the war, manages to get himself disguised as a dairymaid and to obtain employment in the household of a certain Count Lubienski, who has two decorative young daughters. In his character of dairymaid he so vamps and charms all the men about the place that he has to be extremely careful and demure; in his real character, however, he is entirely and indiscreetly successful with the young ladies of the house. The complications of his position are endless, and are handled with a nice inconsequence. There are delicious character sketches, as of some of the girls' suitors, and of their father, Lubienski, who has only two concerns in life—to give up smoking, a problem which agitates him so much that he has to calm himself with cigarettes, and to get all his clothes well aired in the garden whenever the sun shines. It is interesting to see what effortless fun the author gets out of these two unremarkable ideas. But really the whole thing is quite gracefully light and unpretentious, with one good and not incongruous touch of dry tragedy, in the character and death of Lavrentiev. The comic opera ending, with unexpected solutions of awkward amorous situations and military decorations for people who are delighted to have them and have no idea why they are conferred, is entirely satisfactory and, admittedly, very frolicsome. KATE O'BRIEN

WYNDHAM LEWIS

Wyndham Lewis: A Discursive Exposition. By HUGH GORDON PORTEUS. *Desmond Harmsworth.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Wyndham Lewis is a hard nut to crack. As satirist, painter, critic, metaphysician, filibuster, literary dustman and infernal dithyrambist, he is a continual affront to our sensibilities and a delight to the intelligence. The range of his activity, the mixture of astoundingly good and merely gimcrack, the sheer energy of his onslaught confound us. No other English writer to-day has been so badly served by critics, who tend unfortunately to write on the subjects that come most easily to them. Mr. Lewis might well complain that though he has never hidden his light under a bushel, others have done it for him. But, in fact, he is himself responsible for the ambiguity of his position; criticism has not "placed" him, and he makes the most of the escape. He is essentially a man of action whose actions take the form of words, a literary politician intent on effecting change, and hence he exaggerates his impact (this is what disturbs us) at the expense of his art. The genuineness of that impact, the superb muscular pattern, will hardly be denied; it is perhaps the chief delight of an author who eschews giving pleasure. At a time when knowledge generally is parcelled out in allotments, each man cultivating his own bit of garden and often enough raising a fortification round it, when every talent in the arts is trimmed into its particular shape like a privet peacock, Mr. Lewis sends his genius hurtling across a whole landscape, carelessly trampling and surveying the

A history
of twenty-five
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motorists are
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preserves of others. He assumes the free role of an intelligent man; his opinion on any subject he has studied—art, literature, politics, Shakespeare, human nature, the modern situation—is worth having, and he gives it. While Mr. Eliot's "I am royalist in politics, classicist in literature, and Anglo-Catholic in religion," only makes us grin, we are forced to agree or disagree with a sentence from Mr. Lewis's manifesto. In all his work, he appeals primarily to the active intelligence; his criticism gives us the bones and sinews of his art.

As a critic, as the Enemy of countless books and pamphlets, Mr. Lewis shows the human mind "in its traditional role of enemy of life, as an oddity outside the machine." The perversity of a thinker like Mandeville which will pick out the discord from every harmony and find its pattern only in leaning *against* the stream, has become with Mr. Lewis a mania for opposition. Mind is opposed to body, will to instinct, art to life. Shakespeare, in *The Lion and the Fox*, is made Machiavellian; in Mr. Lewis himself the adversary—vorticist, not-self, diabolical principle—rises triumphant. From this conflict, or rather series of clashes, his art emerges in the form of humorous explosion.

Satire is the one positive resulting from the negative reactions of Mr. Lewis's critical temperament; instinctively he makes those reactions as violent as possible in order that as satirist he may give them the fullest release. *The Art of Being Ruled* is thus in a sense the preparation for *The Apes of God*; *Time and Western Man* for *The Childermass*. If these books are read together, in pairs, their relation will be obvious. Apart from the intellectual backing or structure of his satire, there is Mr. Lewis's faith in the virtues of the eye. What the eye sees is final—and ridiculous. It opens a window for the intelligence on to a world of Martians, whom "the chemistry of personality puffs up in frigid balls, soapy Snow-men, arctic carnival-masks, which we can photograph and fix." "The root of the Comic is to be sought in the sensations resulting from the observations of a *thing* behaving like a person. But from that point of view all men are necessarily comic: for they are all *things*, or physical bodies, behaving as persons." Before the curtain goes up on Mr. Lewis's satire, he has first killed the actors with his diabolical eye, like the Caliph Vathek, and then galvanised them into action (slowed down for our greater enjoyment) with the electricity of an irrational life-force. *All* men, it will be noticed, are comic; and they are comic in action, because their bodies are machines which never respond to the demands of the mind. Is not this the revenge of Mr. Lewis, the man of action, on the circumstances which have made him an artist? The weakness of his satire is that he must first kill, before he can give life, that he must parade his characters as dead specimens, propped up from behind and knocked on the head each moment as his art brings them to life: the thug, the mysterious Pierpoint, remains invisible, and we see only the extraordinary life-and-death antics of his victims. The spectacle is unique in literature, a destructive legerdemain made possible only by Mr. Lewis's surplus of energy. But it contains its own antidote. Such satire keeps us in two minds: delight of the moment, disappointment in the long run. It operates in short rushes, and though the author may keep his breath, he exhausts us.

Mr. Porteus in his "discursive exposition," which is half an analysis and appreciation of Mr. Lewis, and half an anthology from his writings, quotes paragraph after paragraph which convince us that Mr. Lewis is a really great writer. Now, I think that Mr. Lewis is probably the best natural satirist we have had since Hogarth—I say this after re-reading all his books—but his art has the fatal check I have attempted to define above. In sentences, in paragraphs, he can be simply magnificent: it is when they are strung together to the length of several hundred pages that we realise the absence of any real *advance* in his narrative. Any book of his is better to begin than to finish (remember the openings of *Tarr* and *The Childermass*), and when you have read it once, to dip in again at intervals. He is always beginning again—a new image, a conflicting argument is added at the last moment; he must slash and slash so that it blurs his line. The metamorphoses of Pulley and Satters in *The Childermass* begin by surprising us but end in bewilderment: their rapid changes of age, sex, hair and countenance deprive them finally of existence altogether. This it is true is part of the intention of the book; but the *method* is self-destructive. And in the texture of the writing an imagery which illustrates Mr. Lewis's "philosophy of the eye" results finally in shortsightedness—the flashing of too many bright lights near the eye. It will be found in all his work, satirical and critical, that while he writes from an unfailing source of intelligence—an intuitive common sense—he develops his ideas and images till they become obsessions. In *Time and Western Man* he is more obsessed by the time-philosophy than any of the writers he is attacking. In *The Childermass*—which ought, one feels, to have been his masterpiece—the ideas, the characters and their surroundings, and the imagery which expresses them, all develop the buzz of obsession.

The good and the bad in Mr. Lewis are therefore inextricable; he is one of those mixed artists whose defects will always drag down the reputation of the artist below his best level. He has probably saved himself by the variety of his work, and his choice of a variety of styles: one line of development, the mastery of a single style, would obviously have been impossible. In *The Lion and the Fox*, *Tarr*, *The Art of Being Ruled*, *The Childermass*, *The Apes of God*, *The Wild Body* and *Time and Western Man*, he has produced a body of work unique for its immediate impact and possessing an energy, a quality of intuition, to which readers in the future will return. Mr. Porteus's estimate of him as one of the great masters of literature can hardly, I think, be supported. His comparison of Mr. Lewis with Blake as a visionary seems to be based on a muddle of the terms visionary and *visuel*, and much of the praise which he gives to Mr. Lewis's imagination should go really to his intelligence. Still, Mr. Porteus is young, enthusiastic and remarkably acute as an advocate, and he is the first critic who has tried to do Mr. Lewis justice, even if he has overdone it.

G. W. STONIER

THE EGYPTIAN PROBLEM

Egypt Since Cromer. By LORD LLOYD. Vol. I. *Macmillan.* 21*s.*

The usual weapon of the Die-hard turned author is the bludgeon; in this book Lord Lloyd prefers the stiletto. That enables him to inflict deadlier wounds on his victims; it also makes him far more readable, and more plausible, too, than the tribe of proconsuls and soldiers who lay about them with abuse and tear passions to tatters. This history of Great Britain in Egypt from 1904 to 1919 is indeed a very able piece of work, well written and trenchantly argued. A great deal of its criticism of men and policies is just. But its conclusion will carry conviction only to those who share Lord Lloyd's prejudices and accept his premisses. Lord Lloyd believes in the divine right of the British to govern inferior peoples. He believes that our rule is justified by a zeal for the welfare of the governed, and especially of the masses, and that it is inspired by the aim of fitting them ultimately for self-government. The theory is admirable. But its practice in the hands of your Tory Imperialist generally has two drawbacks. It is their business, and not that of the governed, to decide what is the true welfare of the masses. And fitness for self-government is always to be looked for round about the Greek Kalends. "Self-determination," we are constantly told, is a mischievous slogan for "natives." Democracy is unsuitable for Orientals. Nationalist leaders, we find, may be patriots and heroes elsewhere; in Africa and Asia they are invariably agitators, extremists, deluders of the people. These are the articles of faith of the Imperialist, and strong in them he fights for the maintenance of control, or bemoans its loss, over Indians, Egyptians, or Irishmen. And Lord Lloyd, with such ideals in his heart and the long record of our errors in Egypt before his eyes, could hardly fail to paint, as he himself calls it, a very sombre picture. His second volume, covering the period from 1919 onwards, will doubtless be grimmer still.

Whether the Occupation itself—or at least its continuance after order had been restored—was a cardinal error, we need not argue here. But evidently the vacillations and uncertainties about it at home, and the anomalies of our position in Cairo, were a heavy handicap. For something like twenty years, under Cromer's beneficent guidance, there seemed little ground for anxiety. But even before he went, the difficulties were looming up. And with weaker men in his place at the Residency, a Liberal Government in England, and a new spirit abroad in the world and in Egypt itself, they became plainer and more formidable. Lord Lloyd recognises the qualities of Gorst and Kitchener, but he is severe on their defects, and he deplores particularly the fact that Kitchener, whilst he did excellent work for the fellaheen, neither cared for nor understood questions of high politics. But it is our policy during the war, from its outbreak to the end, that draws his heaviest criticism. The declaration of the protectorate was a bad mistake, in Lord Lloyd's view, and on that point many will assent who see eye to eye with him on little else. He himself would have preferred annexation; he admits the risks and difficulties attendant on it, but he does not seem to appreciate them at their full

value. Annexation in 1914 might well have meant—almost certainly would have meant—a worse disaster for us than anything that actually occurred. In his strictures on our treatment of the Egyptians in the course of the war and at its close Lord Lloyd is on firmer ground. No real defence can be found for the neglect or open breaches of our "trusteeship," our pressure to recruit men and requisition beasts for the Labour Corps and the Camel Corps, our rebuff to the Egyptian Prime Minister after the Armistice, our contemptuous treatment of Egypt's reasonable claims and aspirations. We threw away all our cards and played into the hands of the Nationalist movement that was rapidly becoming a formidable power.

And then, after the outbreak in the spring of 1919, came what Lord Lloyd regards as the crowning blunder. Sir Reginald Wingate was superseded as High Commissioner—"unjustly and discourteously superseded" in Lord Lloyd's words—by General Allenby, who, instead of using the big stick on the disturbers of the peace, brought back Zaghlul Pasha and his fellow deportees from their exile in Malta. From that "appalling surrender" Lord Lloyd dates all the subsequent troubles, of which we shall hear the account in his next volume. Other people, who do not share his Die-hard sentiments, take a very different view of Lord Allenby's character and actions, and regard the "surrender" of April, 1919, as the prelude to an honester and a more hopeful policy in Egypt. It was not an easy policy to carry out. It was fumbled again and again by the politicians on both sides; it had setback after setback, and it still awaits its fulfilment. But the alternative—the Imperialist alternative—was impossible. Egypt would not have stood it, and public opinion in this country would not have stood it. We are learning reluctantly but surely the truth of Lord Milner's dictum: "Government is such an imperfect business at the best, that it is more important that people should have the system which they like than, if possible, a better system which they like less." C. M. L.

A REMARKABLE WOMAN

E. Nesbit: A Biography. By DORIS LANGLEY MOORE *Benn.* 15s.

"Publishers tell me that children don't want to read my sort of books any more," E. Nesbit wrote to Miss Clemence Dane in 1921. If this was true, then those of us who had the good fortune to be children some years earlier must pity our successors for having missed a grand adventure. Certain books become classic features on a child's horizon; their incidents seem fixed in eternity, and at the same time more close and intimate than the toy train on the nursery table or the first donkey-ride at the seaside. The Nesbit stories seemed to be our own discovery but nobody's invention. We went through the Amulet to Babylon, watched the Psammyead ("pronounced Sammy-ad"; it was as solemn as a French lesson) inflating itself to grant wishes, saw and heard the Ugly-Wuglies come to life and talk with roofless mouths. These items were as unchangeable as history; so it is even now a shock to find Mrs. Langley Moore criticising the Ugly-Wuglies as being "frightening to children." They were deliciously horrifying, and have proved unforgettable; and they showed that E. Nesbit knew that a child can appreciate other aspects than the pretty.

But she knew it unconsciously. Perhaps the very effect of rightness in her stories is due to the fact that she was never aware of their perfection, and—in the matter of literature—loved her bad children better than her good ones. Her aim and goal was to write poetry, although her keenest efforts in this line resulted in nothing worthier than pleasant verse. Prose was considered a mere money-making industry, and it was all one to her whether she worked on these incomparable children's tales, or on "adult" fiction containing no truth in character, plot or observation. We see her, in Mrs. Langley Moore's biography, frenziedly and erratically turning out crude thrillers for magazines, sentimental Christmas-card lyrics, illustrated "gift-books," or stories written to order round a batch of pictures. Given her desperate need to earn money, this faculty was blessing enough; but it destroyed self-criticism, allowing her throughout her life to present absurdities in fiction and puerilities in verse. (Haven't we groaned over "Little Brown Brother" as heartily as we exulted in "The Would-be-Goods"?) In fact, now that we ex-children know how our goddess looked on her best work, we exchange a mystery for a puzzle concerning the question of its creation.

Mrs. Langley Moore's frank and well-balanced life-story supplies the clue besides the puzzle. E. Nesbit's remarkable and vivid personality stands out from it with such clearness that she would have been worth writing about even if all her output, instead of about three-quarters, had been worthless. Athletic, impulsive, a genuine Bohemian, careless in household matters and "aesthetic" (as the 'nineties understood it) in dress, she had unquenchable courage and vivacity, with the enthusiasms and the petulance of a child. The main years of her life were devoted to a restless race for time and money; a race in which cooking, sewing, entertaining, charitable work and the general delights of wasted hours took part. Her understanding of the juvenile mind was not reasoned and external, despite the proximity of her own children as models; it was rather the outpouring of a wonder and naivety that defied her would-be mature efforts to moralise, be practical, and write serious poetry. Yet she was forty before she let this element flow into books as well as into life. This shows the strength of it; for her experiences had not been of the sort to spare illusions. And Hubert Bland, the Tory Socialist, untiring controversialist, and incurable woman-hunter, could have been no easy proposition as a husband; yet he kept her affection until his death, after causing her repeated pain and difficulty.

These early years of their marriage, coinciding with the foundation of the Fabian Society, of which both were active supporters, supply excellent records from E. Nesbit's pen of the original members, including some valuable matter for Shavians. In later years the Blands kept open house, although the visitor had to chance anything from a plate of haricot beans to an elaborate French dinner according to the immediate state of finances, and might arrive to find both host and hostess locked away finishing their work. E. Nesbit's generosity to young authors was a by-word, and extended to many now living besides those who have allowed her biographer to refer to them. Even so, there is plentiful reference here to well-known literary figures, whether contemporary with or junior to E. Nesbit; but this is rightly subordinated to the study of one of the most distinctive, irresistible, and—with all its shortcomings and contradictions—triumphant personalities amongst women writers.

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UNCRITICAL OPTIMISM

Can Europe Recover? By H. R. KNICKERBOCKER. *Lane.* 7s. 6d.

There was once a Sicilian (or it may have been Corsican) brigand whose habit it was to tie his victims tightly together in couples, kill one of each pair, and leave the survivor to perish helplessly, lashed to the rotting corpse. In the United States to-day there is a widespread popular opinion that Fate, or the unwisdom of politicians, has placed the guileless American citizen in precisely the position of the lingering victim; the corpse, needless to say, being Europe. Played-out industries, out-of-date methods, pauperism, civil decay and impending revolution, loom large in the average American's mental picture of the average European state; and the fact that large numbers of American investors have suffered personally from Europe's economic mishaps does not help matters. The effects of this attitude on the prospects of American co-operation in world reconstruction hardly need underlining; and any writer setting himself to correct it is working in a good cause. It is precisely this task which Mr. Knickerbocker, in the latest of his semi-journalistic essays, has undertaken; and it is undoubtedly as a tract addressed to his compatriots that his book should be read.

Considered in any other light, *Can Europe Recover?* bristles with obvious faults. Its slapdash, breezy, special-correspondent style may please some as much as it infuriates others, and its broad, sweeping generalisations are inevitable in a 300-page survey of the whole field of European economic conditions. Its uncritical optimism, its irresponsible use of statistics, and its superficiality of argument are less easy to forgive. And the chapters on the British situation really contain too many wearisomely familiar fallacies to be passed over without protest. How many more times are we to be informed that the unemployed of to-day on their reduced dole are, owing to the fall in the cost of living index, better off than the unemployed of 1929? How many more times must the inevitable reply be made, that quite apart from the irrelevance of the index to a large part of the workers' expenditure, what is adequate to keep a family in food over a few weeks is hopelessly inadequate as a total income when long-continued unemployment has brought not only food but rent and clothing and inevitable household renewals within the budget of the dole? Then the tariff, we are told, has cut down imports by some £100,000,000 during 1932; and the internal market for the British manufacturer has *ipso facto* expanded to the same extent. Really, Mr. Knickerbocker! This sort of thing inspires doubt as to the reliability of other parts of the survey. The glowing description of the achievements of the Papen regime reads rather unconvincingly; perhaps it is unfair to be wise after the event, but at the very least it was surely a little premature to claim that Von Papen had "restored the principle of flexible wages" and "broken the hold of the Trade Unions."

On the other hand, Mr. Knickerbocker describes the famous Papen Plan in language of admirable clarity; he is at his best when, eschewing prophecy and even evaluation, he devotes himself to the straightforward description and analysis of the problems confronting Europe and of the various institutions, economic and other, which different countries have evolved as instruments of recovery. It is difficult to think of any one work of comparable size, let alone of comparable ease of reading, which gives such full and such readily digestible information on the Danubian wheat problem, the machinery of the Instituto Mobiliare Italiano, the Bank for International Settlements, and the currency difficulties of Central Europe. His reporting of significant incidents and conversations, his dramatisations of the men he selects as representative, have a vividness—and, at the same time, an exasperating cocksureness—which will be familiar to readers of his "Soviet Five-Year Plan." It is easy to admire Mr. Knickerbocker's journalistic gifts; it is easier still to be infuriated by them. But when the book is regarded as a step towards convincing the voters of America—the country which more than any other is capable of answering "Yes" or "No" to Mr. Knickerbocker's query—that their partners in distress can and must be their partners in recovery, that the very bonds which unite them are the source not of destruction but of hope, then exasperation gives way to sympathy and a fervent hope that this doughty champion of optimism may succeed in his mission. In so good a cause one can forgive even Mr. Knickerbocker's "non-stop variety" vision of London.

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The Eaten Heart. By RICHARD ALDINGTON. *Chatto and Windus.* 3s. 6d.

The chief difficulty for anyone who sets out to write poetry at present is to get clear of the wreckage of the great romantic age, and to build up some sort of tenable position. Until we have concentrated our forces and rearranged our plans there is very little hope of success.

Mr. Hogben, indeed, is untroubled by the problem, as he has every right to be, for many of these poems were written in the 'eighties. His work is perfectly honourable and sound, maintains a high *Times* standard of good taste, has occasional flashes of grace and felicity, and is, on the whole, uninteresting.

Mr. Montgomerie has all the air of being a faker, using clichés to let off stock responses, and picking up one poetic fashion after another. Possibly, however, this effect is due only to lack of sophistication and too great facility in writing. He suffers acutely from the great romantic disease of the capital I, also from heart, soul, solar plexus and other mystical apparatus. On the other hand, he does attempt to state some of his ideas about socialism—of an idealistic type, resembling the Prime Minister's—negro religion, and so on, with some degree of clarity. They are not very interesting ideas. He seems to handle his words clumsily and without any sensitiveness to their finer shades of meaning or to their more exciting and powerful effects. In particular, his blank verse and *vers libre* are slow, lumpish and disorganised. He is at his best in some of his imitations of the Chinese, where he makes use of very fair powers of observation:

A curlew in a meadow by the river
Whistling to his echo from the crag.
A breeze that leaves the grass astir,
Like a multitude of people in the streets
Talking of calamity.

"The Government is tottering. We must deal it the death blow at any cost. To delay action is the same as death."

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Mr. Lucas's poem is a very different matter. An epic in four thousand lines of enjambed decasyllabic couplets on the adventures of Theseus is a surprising event in modern poetry, and poses problems so difficult that even a partial success arouses admiration. Mr. Lucas's line of escape from the romantic poeticality is the interesting and hopeful one of the story in verse, told with a general freedom and intelligence that has hardly been practised in narrative poetry since *Don Juan*. Indeed, Mr. Lucas's modernised and intelligent Theseus has a good deal in common with Byron's hero—above all, a readiness to make love to every pretty girl he meets, which is a most commendable departure from the romantic tradition. In addition, his story is constructed with classic dexterity and neatness, and both story and verse have a breath-taking rapidity which is wholly admirable. Besides these qualities, Mr. Lucas has, by some extraordinary mastery over his couplet, managed to get effects of power, speed and rhetoric which one would have supposed only to be possible with the stopped heroic form :

> O King and Priest, Keeper of Heaven and Hell ;
> We are young in Hellas, too young yet to spell
> Your wisdom—yours the glory and the power !
> Yet we are free, we have not learnt to cower
> Before kings' sceptres and priests' mummeries—
> Our gods ask not bowed heads nor cringing knees !
> Let all Crete fawn before you. Poor are we,
> But all your gold buys not our liberty,
> Not all your slaves can tame us, though yours the tameless sea.

Yet with all these qualities of speed, skill and intelligence, I do not think the poem is perfectly successful. Mr. Lucas seems curiously uninterested in the full effect of words as apart from their plain sense, their translation meaning. He is always so interested in saying what he means and then getting on to the next thing without wasting time that he does not trouble about the more minute effects of his language. Indeed, he is rather distressingly ready to use chevilles and clichés like " a swift, shy look," " this morn," " knows no ruth." The decayed romanticism from which the main structure of the poem is free remains deeply imbedded in the diction.

The method used by Mr. Aldington in his new poem is very much that of his *Dream in the Luxembourg*. There is a clear and intelligible argument about the nature of love presented with all the advantages of poetry—abrupt entry into the subject, sudden transitions based on emotional pseudo-logical argument, and a general tone sufficiently highly pitched to permit effects of restraint and precision. The necessity for getting worked up to a pitch of emotion, which almost always leads to disaster in poetical prose, is avoided by setting out the work as a poem, printed in short lines, though the unrhymed *vers libres* are in many places readable as plain—and very good—prose : " Of course, you can say it is the war, but you cannot put everything down to the war, nor to the machines either. We have mistaken the problem, overlooked the tragedy. We are all rather like Philoctetes, but we do not know it." In the shorter lyric poems the method seems to me on the whole unsuccessful, for there is not the accumulation which, in the long poem, eventually sets up a loose, vague rhythm reminding one of Langland's accentual verse. Nor is there the argument to give pace, and a certain amount of richness and accumulated effects by allusions and reference.

But in spite of such occasional effects the poem is curiously bare and thin. Mr. Aldington seems to have taken considerable pains to avoid romantic poeticality—he is, on the whole, successful, though there are some lines like " a poignant memory, a dream." But in spite of this explicit avoidance, it looks as if he had not entirely escaped from the romantic point of view—his belief in Love with a capital L, his preoccupation with Greek and Provençal, are signs of this, and in the same way he seems to have been unable to invent any alternative means for producing the " single line " effects of properly poetic emotion which are perhaps the most valuable quality of poetry. JULIAN BELL

SHORTER NOTICES

Strindberg and Shakespeare. By JOAN BULMAN. *Cape.* 6*s.*

This study of Strindberg's debt to Shakespeare will be valuable for students. Its appeal to the general reader is limited, because Miss Bulman confines her analysis to the historical plays, which are never performed in England and in some cases have not yet been translated. Her book follows opportunely, however, on the publication last year of four of Strindberg's historical plays in an English version. She has had access to the manuscripts of these plays and to Strindberg's copy of Shakespeare, from which some interesting annotation is quoted. Strindberg borrowed more from Shakespeare than from any other writer—incidents and even speeches, as well as dramatic ideas ; the influence of *Henry IV* and *Henry V* on *Gustav Vasa* and *Eric XIV* is traced in detail. Miss Bulman mentions that Strindberg as a young man regarded himself as another Hamlet, and it is a pity that she does not follow up the Shakespearean influence on Strindberg's character as expressed in his better-known plays for the " intimate theatre " ; there are speeches in *The Father*, for example, and turns of thought which have their obvious source. But her book will serve a good purpose if it draws attention to the neglected historical plays.

Culinary Herbs and Condiments. By M. GRIEVE, F.R.H.S. *Heinemann.* 5*s.*

The first part of this book, dealing with the cultivation of sweet and culinary herbs and their uses, is admirable, and it is to be hoped it will encourage country cooks to demand more of gardeners than the parsley, mint, and occasional leaf of sage for stuffing, to which they tend to limit themselves. But it is a great pity that Mr. Grieve does not mention the *bouquet garni* which is the very foundation of French bourgeois cookery. It is in the *bouquet*—a small leek or several chives, a sprig of thyme, a bunch of parsley and a bayleaf, with the optional ingredients of tarragon, chervil, or marjoram, all tied together with string—that herbs are most useful and make most difference.

In the second part, the author gives us a long list of herb teas, and still more formidable herb beers, concocted with such ingredients as saccharine, foam essence, and block juice, which we do not think many of his readers will care to try for themselves. But he does not deal with the different varieties of French *tisanes* which are both more palatable and more wholesome. Worst of all there is no mention of Mint Julep. Anyone who has stood under the Virginian sun in August, and has lifted the dewy glass jug, full of cracked ice, with all its interstices yellow with rye whisky, and has then plunged his snout into the huge posy of fresh mint, will not readily forgive the omission. The last section on condiments is excellent.

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unexceptionable service, none of them has ever gripped public fancy as one or two rivals have done. This is possibly due to the fact that less conscientious engineers have offered the ignorant buyer high road performances inconsistent with rational durability; and the Rover Company has been nurtured on owners of the type who desire a sound, handsome carriage which will be as good as new in its second or third year. This conservative policy has certainly cost the firm money; but it deserved to pay in the long run, and the 1933 models are unquestionably conquerors.

This Pilot coupé does not differ externally or ostentatiously from perhaps a dozen rivals of roughly similar specification. It would be unreasonable to demand that it should. The industry has pooled its knowledge. A car consists of a few straightforward components—engine, transmission, suspension, brakes, body, and so forth. Of the sum allotted to the cost of a car so much is ear-marked for the engine on every car listed at £278; and there will not be collossal differences between two such engines of different makes, allowing for the radical divorce between the two schools which emphasise speed and stamina respectively. There will, as a rule, be even less difference between the two transmissions, or the two sets of brakes. Yet, oddly enough, there may be—and often is—a mighty difference between two complete cars, for a set of typical components do not necessarily bed down into a perfect car. The unquestionable charm of this particular Rover is thus twofold. It is assembled from a number of individually excellent components, and the various departments of the factory have happily conducted their several jobs so as to evolve a car which forms a perfect whole, and can claim personality.

At first acquaintance I liked its looks, and of all bodies a close-coupled sports coupé most appeals to me, especially on a chassis of medium power. This type of body is light, and so does not drag on the engine up hills or when acceleration is demanded. It looks trim, neat and practical, whilst in this instance an artist has evidently planned the contours. For two travellers it furnishes ideal comfort, together with ample space for the gear which the longest holiday tour may compel one to carry. There is, additionally, a really good stern locker, shaped to adorn and not to disfigure. If four people go aboard, they can all talk, and the driver is never set to yell remarks over his shoulder. On the road the Pilot comes up to my standard in a way which few cars of its size can equal, for it is capable of fifty miles an hour on the third of its four forward gears. This point may not appeal to everybody, but it is a vital safety provision on modern roads. When a slow vehicle creates eddies in the traffic stream violent acceleration on third gear is essential to safety; it permits one to overtake on short straights and reduces the dangerous period for which one lies abreast of that slow vehicle. Many third gears are plotted so high that they are hardly more useful than top for overtaking purposes, and fail again when a long hill is met. This Rover third gear is perfect in its way. Second and third gears are both of the silent constant-mesh type, and for those who fumble their gear-changes a free-wheel is provided. If this free-wheel is worked hard, the fuel consumption can be stretched to just about thirty miles a gallon by a mild driver, a notable figure for a 60 m.p.h. car with a big body; lurid drivers, ignoring the free-wheel, will register about twenty-five miles per gallon. All the factors which combine to establish the car's relations with the road are a little above ordinary standards. The suspension furnishes real comfort in both cockpits and functions abnormally well on corners. If the car is driven rather too fast on bends it does not sway or bucket or skid, as it might be expected to do. The brakes come on smoothly, dispose of splendid power, and do not demand any great muscular output.

The remaining body details are all good. The door windows all have split glasses operated by straightforward finger pressure on metal pushes; this is a quicker and more natural action than the popular winders, which often give trouble. The dashboard contains an enormous cubby-hole and a splendid range of instruments. These include the essential Startix for automatically restarting the engine when the driver "loses his prop" on a fine throttle setting in traffic; a double oil gauge, which warns him if the oil sinks low in the sump; a big knurled knob for the control of the free-wheel; and a set of exceptionally clear dials. The sports coupé has, of course, only two doors, but they are reasonably lofty and wide; big people can sling themselves in and out of the front seats in a casual manner; since the two front seats are separate fauteuils with adjustable mountings, the space and comfort create the illusion of a really enormous vehicle when only two are aboard. It becomes more cramped when the back seats are occupied, but even then entry and exit are good, for the backs of the fauteuils fold forwards, and the door width is ample.

The engine is capable of a good turn of speed, as evinced by its top and third gear limits; but it is singularly free from the obsession of a single cruising speed, so marked with some engines. If the driver elects to cruise at 20, or at 30, or at 45, or indeed at any intermediate gait, the selected speed always seems easy and natural. There cannot be a sounder or pleasanter vehicle at the price.

R. E. DAVIDSON.

Playtime

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

PROBLEM 7.—KAFFIRS

Guggelheimer and Rosenberg brought off a successful coup in the Kaffir market. Rosenberg, who loves a mystery, handed the following to Guggelheimer during a game of Contract:

"What
PRICE THIS HAND?
♠53 ♥6543 ♦6782534 ♣—
This gives you our *objective* and *zero hour*."

Decipher Rosenberg's message.

PROBLEM 5.—LEGATEES

Sir Rice Pudden's estate is apportioned as follows:

To the heirs of John Driver	.. ..	£3,000
" " *Alfred Carpenter*	.. ..	£2,500
" " *Tom Butler*	.. ..	£2,500
" " *Harry Carter*	.. ..	£2,000
" *Cats' Home*	.. ..	£2,000

It must be assumed that the legatees are *all* referred to by their names or *all* by their vocations. (For if not, the word "otherwise" has no meaning.) On this assumption,

"Carpenter"	is entitled to	$\frac{1}{6}$	of the estate.	
"Carter"	"	"	$\frac{1}{6}$	" "
"Butler"	"	"	$\frac{1}{4}$	" "
"Driver"	"	"	$\frac{1}{4}$	" "
The Cats' Home	"	"	$\frac{1}{6}$	" "

This allocation can be made in two ways (according to names and according to vocations) and the final distribution is the average of the two.

The problem has produced an astonishing amount of arithmetic and a number of incorrect solutions of which hardly any two agree. "Macbeth" sends the following note:—

"I regret to report at least three appeals against Mr. Justice Caliban's judgment.

"One is by the Cats' Home on the ground that, where the legatee cannot be determined, the legacy lapses. Mr. Justice Caliban seems to have relied on Mother Zebedee v. Mother Rachel, commonly called the Sword case or, more vulgarly, 'Have a split' case—but in spite of Solomon C. J.'s high reputation, it is contended this is no precedent for *British* courts.

"Another by Sir R. P.'s personal representatives follows a similar line.

"The third by the heirs of Mr. Alfred Carpenter points out that this man was younger than Sir R. P. while the other three personally named legatees were older. The law presumes in such a case that, while the other three died before Sir R. P., Mr. A. C. survived him and is therefore entitled to his full share under the bequests."

PROBLEM 4.—PING PONG

A set of Low's cartoons is awarded to:
C. E. Vogel, 11 Parsifal Road, N.W.6.
There were 158 correct and twenty incorrect solutions.
On the cumulative-point basis, *five* points are awarded for this problem.

CROSSWORDS

I have to acknowledge with thanks a number of letters; also offers of collaboration, which are greatly appreciated but raise various practical difficulties. The Crossword question is now under careful consideration by the Editor.

PRIZES FOR PROBLEM-SOLVERS

One set of Low's cartoons is awarded weekly to the sender of a correct solution selected at random.

In addition, a record is kept of the names of senders of all correct solutions submitted. All solvers qualify for book prizes on a cumulative-point basis. For particulars see THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION of December 24th.

Solutions to the current problem must be addressed to CALIBAN, c/o THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, 10 Gt. Queen Street, London, W.C.2, and must reach this office not later than the next Tuesday but one after the date of publication.

CALIBAN

COMPANY MEETING

LLOYDS BANK

A YEAR OF SHARP CONTRASTS

ESSENTIAL FACTORS FOR REVIVAL

The Seventy-fifth Ordinary General Meeting of Lloyds Bank Limited was held on Friday, February 3rd, at Southern House, Cannon Street, London, E.C.

Mr. J. Beaumont Pease, the chairman of the Bank, presided, and, in moving the adoption of the report and accounts, said: I think the thanks of the commercial community are due to Mr. Herbert Williams, the Member for Croydon South, who, with the assistance of our good friend, Mr. E. T. Hargraves, was instrumental in procuring the passage of the Bills of Exchange Act Amendment Act, 1932. This Act legalised the crossing of bank drafts, and so facilitated and safeguarded payments arising out of conveyancing and other business.

The Balance Sheet

Our published Reserve of £8,000,000 has been improved by the addition of £500,000 re-transferred from our internal funds. You will remember that last year we took £2,500,000 from our published Reserve to meet the depreciation on our investments. Owing to the recovery in the prices of gilt-edged stocks (and to the actual realised profits of investments sold at enhanced values) the whole of that depreciation has been more than recovered, and the reserve against it is now entirely free.

Our liabilities to the public in the form of Deposits and other accounts have increased since last year by more than £48,000,000, and stand at the record figure for this Bank of £382,142,704 15s. 9d. This experience has been shared by other banks, and the total deposits of all the clearing banks have been increased during the last twelve months by £232,892,000.

The consequence is that the purchasing power of the community, as expressed in deposits in the banks, has been greatly extended. But the mere existence of plentiful money supplies is not in itself sufficient to have any marked effect on prices. Before the desired increase in the price level can be realised, something must occur to induce the owners of this increased purchasing power to put it into use. Many people hoped and believed for a short time that the Hoover Moratorium announcement in June, 1931, might have provided this much-needed impulse. Received at first with acclamation, subsequently hesitancy and dispute set in, and the original enthusiasm slowly dissipated itself into the former lethargy and unhopeful inertia.

War Debts

Is it too much to hope that the representatives of the Powers shortly meeting in conference together may be able to find another and more lasting reason for the belief that the beginnings of better things are stirring in the womb of time? It is essential that the opportunity for so doing should not be missed. The immediate task for the Conference has been well stated by this country's representatives on the preparatory committee, and consists in the finding of some means of settlement of war debts, in the better co-operation between the Central Banks in monetary matters, in abolishing exchange restrictions and the relaxation of excessive tariffs. All these are obvious handicaps to trade, but how slow are the feet of the peoples on the path of wisdom. The greatest creditor nation has still to be convinced that it would be to her own interests to cancel war debts and thus remove the most outstanding obstacle to the restoration of trade and prosperity. In these large matters "the world waits upon politics" and no one can yet say with any certainty what will be the outcome of the deliberations of the World Conference, but sooner or later we believe that truth will prevail and that all nations will realise that they cannot live by themselves alone at the expense of the poverty of their neighbours.

Employment of Funds

To return to our Balance Sheet, the remaining items on the Liabilities side are similar to those appearing last year, and call for no comment except for the decrease of £4,000,000 under the heading Endorsements, Guarantees, etc.

On the Assets side, the increase in our Cash and money at call is commensurate with the increase in our Deposits. The large increase of £39,000,000 in Treasury Bills is one of the examples of our difficulty in employing our resources profitably, and is accompanied by a decrease of £5,000,000 in British and Colonial bills of exchange, which is a further proof of the decline in trade.

Banks have done what they could to encourage a greater use of bills amongst the trading community at home.

The amount we earned during the second half of last year on our money at call was only £1 3s. 4d. per cent., as compared with £4 3s. 4d. per cent. in the corresponding period in 1931, while the return on our bills was only 15s. 1d. per cent., as compared with £4 7s. 10d. per cent. A still more significant instance of the difficulty of employing our money is to be found in the wholly exceptional increase of £33,000,000 in our investments.

The next item, "Loans and Advances, after deducting provision for bad and doubtful accounts," shows the large reduction of £26,000,000 and represents the low percentage to our deposits of 36.8.

Profit and Loss Account

We next come to our Profit and Loss Account. The net profit brought in is £376,000 lower than the figure shown last year, for the reasons which will have been made clear to you in going through the figures of our Balance Sheet, but it must be remembered that this year we have met the whole of our bad and doubtful debts out of profits, whereas last year we had partial recourse to our Contingency Account for this purpose.

You will see from these figures that we could have recommended a dividend at the same rate as last half-year and still have had a surplus of £50,000 after certain income tax adjustments, and no doubt you would like to have a word from me as to the reasons which influenced our decision. If 1932 had stood by itself, and if we had been able to see with any degree of certainty that 1933 was likely to prove a normal year, I have little doubt that we would have recommended the same dividend as before, but we were faced with the fact that, owing to lower rates, the second half of last year was much less profitable than the first half, and as there did not seem to be any immediate prospect of a rise in rates during the current year, we felt it prudent to recognise the possibility of lower profits in the future. Apart, however, from this chief consideration, we did not wish to give you or the public the impression that in our opinion the present time might be considered normal. It is far from normal, and it is a time when we believe wise men in business should as far as possible take every precaution to maintain their position in great strength.

The Past Year

The figures which we have been discussing represent the result, as far as we are concerned, of a year which may well stand out in history as truly remarkable. For bankers it has been one of peculiar difficulty and of sharp contrasts. It began with high rates and a low level of investments. It ended with rates which left little margin of profits, and with investments greater in amount and at higher values than they have ever been. It has seen the dollar rate of sterling as high as 3.81 in the spring, and as low in the autumn as 3.14. The glut of production has not been accompanied by an increase of consumption, and this has led some observers to the despairing conclusion that machines, the work of men's hands, have finally and hopelessly left those very hands empty of work in the future. It was a year of hope and disappointment, and Lausanne failed to achieve fully its early promise, conference followed conference, and still the channels of trade remained restricted and blocked. Geneva so far has been unable to bring peace where there is war, and the turmoil of elections has not brought rest in international affairs. If this is a true picture of the last 12 months, with its many problems still unanswered, is it not also a confirmation of our prudence in regard to our dividend? But while we deem it our duty to be prepared for the worst, we also allow ourselves the liberty of hoping for the best. Although last year was in many respects, as I have said, a year of disappointment, it was also to my mind much more a year of preparation and expectation.

Signs of Improvement

In putting that possibility forward I am not thinking merely of the encouraging signs of improvement which we have lately witnessed in this country, the slight rise in shipping freights, the fact that there is 25 per cent. less shipping laid up in the Tyne than a few months ago, or the increased demand in coal, iron, or steel. What gives me more cause for hope is the growing desire to face realities and to co-operate in the endeavour to find a way out of our difficulties. This is apparent in every sphere. In our home life the spirit which created a National Government and surrendered purely sectional interests is as alive now as it always has been. Without such a spirit the success of the greatest financial operation in history would not have been possible last Autumn. The same spirit is discernible in a reawakening of the desire for social services, and a quickening of religious thought. To my mind this is evidence of a determination which in the end will not be denied. History supports me in the hope that the world will not and cannot logically be impoverished in the long run by an accretion of those things which constitute real wealth, even though there may be many dislocations of trade and hardship to individuals in the process of finding a better distribution of the product of men's hands amongst those who so greatly desire them. The eyes of man are anxiously on the look out for that small cloud of promise on the horizon, even though it may be no bigger at first than his own hand, which will bring hope that the long drought is nearing its end. A resolute decision of the World Conference shortly to be held, or some other event appealing to the imagination, might very readily to my mind provide the longed-for sign. But though a prime condition of industrial recovery is, of course, the solution of the difficult financial problems of an international character with which we are confronted to-day, that in itself will not ensure the return of prosperity to this country, unless we exercise the same resourcefulness and enterprise in face of the circumstances of to-day which our predecessors showed in no less difficult though somewhat different circumstances in the past. To-day there is probably no direction affording a better prospect of rich reward than scientific discovery. We must therefore turn more and more to the research worker to point the way towards new advances, and industry must realise that an efficient and well-equipped research organisation is an essential element of good management.

Finally, in this period of preparation, every individual in this country can do something to help on recovery by wisely spending all that he can afford.

The Report was received and adopted, and a dividend was declared for the half-year ended the 31st December last of 1s. 0 4-5d. on each "A" Share, making a total dividend of 12 per cent. for the year, and of 6d. on each "B" Share, making a total dividend of 5 per cent. for the year.

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By TOREADOR

THIS "KAFFIR" BOOM—MEDIUM-GRADE SHARES ANALYSED
—TEA ON THE BOIL

THE slump being what it is—a slump in human intelligence—it should surprise no one to hear that prosperity may be restored by producing more of that useless commodity—gold. The boom in South African gold mining shares may seem incredibly silly, but it is a boom. Profits quickly made are as a rule quickly squandered, and a successful market speculator treating his friends to champagne and supper at the Savoy is of more social usefulness than an unsuccessful speculator compounding with his creditors in Carey Street. I do not, however, subscribe to the theory that a slump can be broken by profits being made out of the security markets and spent. It may be good for the successful speculator to spend another's hard-won savings (which is what happens), but even if £30 millions of savings are spent by the "cashing in" of so much appreciation in Rand mining shares (valued before the boom at £150 millions) it will not carry us very far—restaurateurs and motor car manufacturers excepted. But in its wider consequences a boom in gold mining is extremely useful to the off-gold half of the world. South Africa, with 50 per cent. of its population directly or indirectly dependent on the gold industry, will be prosperous enough to increase its purchases in the sterling area. With a larger output from their gold mines Canada and Australia will find their external debts less burdensome. Every country will be blessed except the countries foolish enough to buy the new gold and bury it in the vaults of their Central Banks.

* * *

If the speculator is worried by the thought that the world will eventually discover that gold is a worthless commodity, except as an ornament on ebony bodies, or that the gold standard countries may eventually refuse to buy the gold from the South African, Canadian and Australian mines, let him take heart. The world is not so reasonable. The man who tries to corner a commodity must always go on buying the available supplies. Otherwise the value of it will slump and he will be ruined. So it is with the gold standard countries. If they stop buying gold, if they confess that gold as a base for currency is unnecessary, they have to admit that the claims on foreign currencies (goods and services) which they had converted into gold were in fact converted into waste. I cannot imagine France letting go her hold on what she conceives to be wealth. Nor, for that matter, America. What the speculator in the "Kaffir" market has mainly to fear is a cheapening of gold in terms of South African pounds, which depends largely on the course of the sterling-dollar rate. The buyer of low-grade gold shares is, in effect, gambling on the exchanges. His protection is the Government's Exchange Equalisation Fund, its policy being to prevent an extreme rise in the pound sterling. If, however, the pound were to be forced up to over $4.00, and working costs at the mines in the meantime were to be increased, it is possible that many of the low grade properties would revert to non-payability. It would be wise, therefore, to confine attention to the medium-grade properties. Here are some selections, with the 1932 dividends (all fully earned) contrasted with the potential earnings if the price of gold this year averaged in South African currency (a) 100s. and (b) 120s. per fine ounce. This calculation allows for no increase in working costs and assumes that taxation remains at its present scale of 4s. in the £.

	Est. Life. Years.	Ore Value dwts. per ton.	1932 Divs. %	Potential Dividends with Gold at (a) 100/- (b) 120/- per fine oz. (a) %	(b) %
Langlaagte £1	12	6.9	20	32	50
Consolidated Main Reef £1	15	6.8	12½	25	45
Geduld £1	15	6.6	37½	60*	80*
Crown Mines 10/-	25	6.5	77½	144	232

* Allowing for increase in dividends from holding in East Geduld with gold at 100/- per oz. and 120/- respectively

* * *

The last column of this table, showing potential earnings with gold at 120s. per ounce, will only mislead the innocent or attract the gamblers. It is, therefore, somewhat scandalous that the South African finance companies should have published the January profit returns of their companies on this basis—without a word of warning as to the possibilities of a rise in working costs, an increase in taxation and a diminution of the gold premium. If we take the ultra-conservative view of an average price this year of 100s. per fine ounce of gold, which is equivalent to a sterling-dollar rate of about 4.13 allowing no change in working costs, a severe dividend-yield test of the market valuation of these shares may be applied:

	Price Dec. 1st, 1932.	Price Feb. 8th, 1933.	Yield % on Dividends with Gold at 100/- per oz.
Langlaagte £1	22/9	32/9	29
Consolidated Main Reef £1	32/6	44/4½	12
Geduld £1	5½	5 ⅝	11½
Crown Mines 10/-	6 ⅜	7⅝	9½

Note: Allowance must be made for differences in estimated "life" in considering differences in yields.

Most speculators would say that this earnings valuation is really too strict a test to apply, but it cannot be emphasised too strongly that the gold premium is a fluctuating, unstable factor and that it is wise to be conservative. At the moment of writing the market has reacted and I have heard a stockbroker remark: "Uneasie lyes the head that weares a Crowne." It was obvious what sort of a "bull" he was, but I would sooner wear Crowns upon my "bullish" head than the shares of any low-grade, high-cost producer.

* * *

It never appeals to me to buy the shares of a primary-commodity producer on the first appearance of an output restriction scheme. To balance production with consumption is hardly worth while unless means are taken to increase consumption—in other words to instil fear that a shortage is coming and that prices will rise to-morrow. The tea share market, however, has gone ahead on the realisation that 95 per cent. of the tea growers have agreed to a restriction of crops by control of exports for a period of five years. The scheme has not yet received the sanction of the governments of the countries concerned, but the Dutch Government is apparently as willing to restrict tea as it is to restrict tin production. The scheme is to come into operation on April 1st with export quotas of 85 per cent. of the quantities produced in the datum years 1929–32. Actually the restriction of output will be more than 85 per cent., because estates are included which were not in bearing or only in partial bearing in the datum period. It is quite a friendly restriction scheme, for each unit may select from among these years its maximum crop. A total export of 685 million lb. is expected in 1933, which is 134 million lb. less than the shipments in 1932. Higher prices are, of course, an essential feature of the scheme and the market has so far obediently advanced quotations by about 2¾d. per lb. (say 30 per cent.) in the past month. And share prices have risen by about 20 per cent. per cent. in the past week. The tea share market has always been a narrow, one-way market.

Economisery!

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By G. D. H. COLE

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says FRANCIS WILLIAMS, City Editor, "Daily Herald."

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